

February 1, 2024

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
Room 131
House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: *House Bill 33: Economic Development – Entrepreneurial Leave Tax Credit - SUPPORT*

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Ways & Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support, on behalf of Inncuvate Consulting LLC., regarding House Bill 33, entitled: Economic Development - Entrepreneurial Leave Tax Credit.

As written, HB33 will establish a new tax credit incentive called the Entrepreneurial Leave Tax Credit Program. Its laudable purpose will encourage qualified employers to receive a credit against their state income tax by providing unpaid leave for employees that are establishing (and expanding) a business in the State of Maryland.

We need more entrepreneurs to help solve problems in our local communities and ultimately grow our economy. However, the life of an entrepreneur is nothing short of trials and tribulations – it takes perseverance, dedication, risk, and sacrifice. The investment and time needed to see any business or start-up succeed is daunting and unrelenting – even for those with a supportive ecosystem. For those without such resources conflated with the financial necessity of maintaining a separate, full-time job to support their healthcare and costs of living while investing in their new business is near improbable and unsustainable.

The enactment of HB33 offers another pivotal pathway forward for entrepreneurial employees to invest in growing their business or start-up without the pressures of losing their current employment. At the same time, it offers employers the ability to support their entrepreneurial employees and offset any potential financial strain to their business operations during the duration of the employee's leave. This legislation would also require the Department of Commerce to provide business support and resources to entrepreneurial employees who take such leave through the program – such support will supplement these entrepreneurs to thrive.

HB33 also mandates the Department to conduct research on the benefits of entrepreneurship. Inncuvate is an entrepreneurship-led economic empowerment enterprise focused on redefining how communities connect all residents with opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Our mission is to build systems that provide more opportunities to create wealth, bridge economic gaps, and develop more serial entrepreneurs. We partner with local stakeholders to fuel creativity and ambition. We specialize in creating purpose-built programs and places that attract the best talent and

create an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and the commercialization of new ideas.

Last year, Inncuvate submitted a white paper to Governor Moore's transition team on the benefits of state investment in building the entrepreneur ecosystem and start-ups, statewide. Given our expertise and ongoing work in supporting Maryland entrepreneurs, Inncuvate would be honored to collaborate with the Department of Commerce in this endeavor.

It is for these reasons that we strongly support HB33 and urge this committee to give this legislation a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lawrence", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Mark Lawrence
Founder/ Managing Partner
Inncuvate