

BSO SB 818 Testimony _ 3.2.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Allison Burr-Livingstone

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing: SB818, State Center - Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group
Position: Supportive

March 2, 2026

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO), I am writing to affirm our support behind Senate Bill 818, legislation establishing and defining the purpose of a newly formed State Center Advisory Group.

The BSO's owned home in Baltimore City since 1982, the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall (the Meyerhoff) and our surrounding campus in the 40th District (including the shuttered Cathedral Garage; the neighboring parking facilities currently serving BSO patrons, musicians and staff; and public transportation including Light Rail services at Cultural Center) is immediately adjacent to State Center.

With generous investments in the 2023-2027 Capital Budgets (enacted and proposed), the BSO together with the Baltimore Symphony Endowment Trust (BSET) has embarked on the first major renovations of the Meyerhoff in its 40+ year history. Furthermore, we are actively exploring the demolition and mixed-use redevelopment of the now shuttered Cathedral Garage, to better serve the BSO's operational needs (including education and community spaces), to better serve more neighbors (including the Lyric, the University of Baltimore, the University of Maryland [Mid-town Campus], MICA, MedChi, and the Greek Church), and to generally strengthen the neighborhood as a desired place for more residents and visitors. Our goals will only be successful with strategic planning and coordination with those organizations leading two of the largest redevelopment projects in the City, also home in the 40th district: Baltimore's Penn Station (an 8-minute walk from the Meyerhoff in one direction) and State Center (an 8-minute walk from the Meyerhoff in the other direction).

Just as we have had initial conversations with Redgate regarding our interests (and known challenges) in a State Center traffic survey inclusive of the greater neighborhood, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to have a representative on this new Advisory Group to ensure the BSO – alongside our peers and neighbors – can provide helpful community input on the State's plans. Equally helpful, we believe such a Group will also help to ensure our own Meyerhoff campus redevelopment plans are informed by greater neighborhood planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison Burr-Livingstone".

Allison Burr-Livingstone
SVP and Chief Advancement & Communications Officer
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

BSOMUSIC.ORG

JOSEPH MEYERHOFF SYMPHONY HALL | THE MUSIC CENTER AT STRATHMORE
1212 CATHEDRAL STREET | BALTIMORE, MD 21201 | 5301 TUCKERMAN LANE | NORTH BETHESDA, MD 20852

Senate Bill 818 Written Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Antonio Hayes

Position: FAV

ANTONIO HAYES

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Legislative District 40



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Bill: Senate Bill 818

Title: State Center – Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Sponsor: Senator Antonio Hayes

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

For the record, I am Senator Antonio Hayes, and I am here to present **Senate Bill 818**. This legislation represents a critical reset for one of the most significant redevelopment opportunities in Baltimore City: the 28-acre State Center complex.

For years, the redevelopment of State Center has been a topic of discussion, negotiation, and delay. SB 818 seeks to move this project forward by establishing a clear, statutory framework for community engagement.

The bill establishes the **State Center Advisory Group**, a body designed to facilitate transparency and ensure that the neighborhoods surrounding the project benefit directly from its development .

Unlike previous iterations which relied on a single entity, this Advisory Group is designed to be inclusive. Its membership includes:

- The president of every neighborhood association within a **1-mile radius** of State Center;
- Designees from anchor institutions; and
- Representatives from historic and vital community organizations

To ensure the community's voice remains independent, the bill includes specific conflict of interest provisions, ensuring that neighborhood representatives employed by anchor institutions represent the interests of their residents, not their employers .

SB 818 does not just create a group for discussion; it gives that group leverage. The bill prohibits the State from entering into a new or modified contract for State Center unless it includes:

1. **A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA):** An enforceable agreement between the developer and the new Advisory Group .
2. **Local Hiring & Economic Inclusion:** A comprehensive local hiring plan that covers short-term construction jobs, long-term employment, and job training, as well as goals for using minority- and women-owned businesses .

Finally, the legislation updates the development requirements to reflect current realities. It broadens the definition of major tenants to include "anchor institutions that provide public or community services" rather than just State agencies . It continues to prioritize a full-service grocery store and green space , while extending the target timeline for commencing construction to a more realistic 24 months after contract execution .

State Center has the potential to be a transformative engine for West Baltimore. SB 818 ensures that this engine is built with the community, not just for it.

This Act will take effect on October 1, 2026. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 818.

Position: Favorable

Letter of Support - SB818 for State Center (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Catherine Orange

Position: FAV



ARENA PLAYERS, INC. 801 MCCULLOH STREET BALTIMORE, MD 21201 410-728-6500

February 27, 2026

Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing today to submit this letter of support for the passage of **Senate Bill 0818: State Center - Development - Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group** on behalf of Arena Players, Inc.

Arena Players, Inc., based in the Seton Hill neighborhood of Baltimore City, is proud to be the oldest continuously operating African-American community theater in the United States. Since 1961, we have made our home at 801 McCulloh Street, just 0.1 miles from the State Center property line at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Arena Players is deeply invested in this community and the development of the State Center. We have owned our building in this community since 1969, and we are currently embarking on a more than \$7 million renovation project. We have both a long-standing history and a strong investment in the future in this neighborhood.

With this in mind, Arena Players is eager to support Senate Bill 0818. State Center development will have a tremendous impact on the surrounding neighborhood, and it is critical that the community is able to provide input, have access to transparent and timely information, and leverage benefits of the project for the surrounding area. We are eager to collaborate with our fellow anchor institutions to support the State Center Advisory Group, and to ultimately support both the State Center and the surrounding region.

It is for these reasons that we encourage you to **support of SB0818: State Center - Development - Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Orange

Arena Players, Inc.

SB 818 FAV 3.4. 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Kurt Schmoke

Position: FAV



Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senate Bill 818
State Center - Development - Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group
March 4, 2026
Favorable

Good Afternoon Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee, I am writing to express my support for **Senate Bill 818**, which establishes an advisory group to provide input on the State Center development. As the president of the University of Baltimore, this project's development will benefit both the institutions near State Center and the neighborhoods that surround it.

The State Center redevelopment represents one of the most significant urban development opportunities in Baltimore City. This state-owned property has the potential to catalyze economic growth, create jobs, strengthen anchor institutions, and revitalize surrounding communities. Meaningful community engagement is key to helping the project be successful and supported by the neighboring communities.

The University of Baltimore is named in SB818 as a designated member of the State Center Advisory Group. As an anchor institution located near State Center, we have both a responsibility and a vested interest in this development's success. University of Baltimore received a 2026 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, for deepening partnerships, leveraging community assets, and addressing urgent societal challenges. Our students, faculty, and staff will be directly impacted by State Center's transformation. SB818 provides the governance structure necessary for institutions like ours to participate meaningfully in shaping State Center's future.

State Center represents an opportunity to demonstrate that large-scale urban development can benefit both anchor institutions and surrounding communities. SB818 provides the governance framework, community engagement mechanisms, and accountability measures necessary to realize that vision.

I support SB818 and urge this committee to issue a **favorable report**.

State Center Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Lee Tawney

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 8181
Bolton Hill Community Association Testimony
March 4, 2026

My name is Lee Tawney. I am the President of the Bolton Hill Community Association. I was born in Baltimore, before State Center was built and have been a resident of Bolton Hill for 45 years.

The Bolton Hill Community Association enthusiastically supports Senate Bill 818. Bolton Hill is a strong, diverse neighborhood of 5,000 people immediately north of State Center, and it is vital to us that State Center become a vibrant good neighbor.

During the last State Center planning process, our organization was a member of the State Center Neighborhood Alliance, and many of us worked directly with members of the development team. Our neighbors have skills and experience that can be of help with the new process.

We are pleased to see that the State is committing several departments to this work. State Center is more than a big site with some big buildings. It is a major transit hub, and it creates the environment for some of Maryland's premier cultural and educational institutions (Baltimore Symphony, Arena Theater, Eubie Blake Center, University of Baltimore, and MICA)

State Center today is a barrier that divides our neighborhood, as well as Madison Park and Marble Hill, from Mount Vernon and from Downtown Baltimore. We are keen to work with the State to turn State Center from a barrier into a bridge. It is hard for us to cross Dolphin Street. It is lonely and sometimes frightening to walk through the site itself. And it is downright dangerous to cross Howard Street. My wife was hit by a car trying to do so.

Whatever happens on the State Center site – whether people live there, work there, shop there, or all of the above – it needs to be a safe and pleasant place to walk.

State Center was one of many Urban Renewal projects that divided Baltimore neighborhoods in the 1950s and the 1960s. It is one of several such projects on the borders of Bolton Hill. work with the State and our neighbors towards that goal. As we proceed, let us be mindful of the people living in McCulloh Homes, The Cecil Apartments, and Bolton House,

We have an opportunity to re-unite with our neighbors on all sides of the site, and you can count on the Bolton Hill Community Association to work with the State and our neighbors towards that goal.

Help us build the bridge by supporting Senate Bill 818.

Testimony SB818 3.4.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Ms. JohnDre Jennings

Position: FAV



DRUID HEIGHTS
Community Development Corporation

Druid Heights Community Development Corporation

2140 McCulloh Street Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Testimony
Bill Hearing – SB818
Position-Support

March 4, 2026

Honorable Chair and Budget and Taxation Committee:

I'm writing to support **SB818** sponsored by Senator Antonio Hayes. The purpose of this act is to assist with additional requirements related to the State Center project and to establish a State Center Advisory Group for the development of State Center..

Druid Heights Community Development Corporation (DHCDC) is a community-based, 501 (c)(3) non-profit community development corporation. DHCDC is located in zip code 21217 in Baltimore City, within Census Tract 1403 a designated Urban Renewal Area. Our mission is to cause, encourage and promote community self-empowerment, through the development of economic, educational, employment, and affordable housing opportunities. DHCDC is pleased that the State of Maryland is taking steps to address the years of economic and neighborhood development abandonment that our community has faced. This support includes funding support towards neighborhood investment for projects which include Bakers View Homeownership project, restoration of our Maggie Quille Center and green space projects such as our Gold Street project.

DHCDC is highly invested in the The State Center project and urge the committee to consider this requirement to assist with community support and provide engagement for a vital project that will involve economic stability for West Baltimore and the greater Baltimore community. In addition, the advisory group will review and oversee:

- 1) implementing an enforceable community benefits agreement between the developer and the State Center Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. to provide for a concerted and coordinated effort by the developer and the community throughout the entire planning, development, and construction phases of the project;
- 2) a comprehensive local hiring plan for the project that includes goals for short-term construction jobs, long-term employment opportunities, and job training; and

I urge the committee to support **SB818** State Center – Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory 2 Group . Thank you for the opportunity to share this written testimony and the chance to weigh in on policy and the wellbeing of West Baltimore. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ms. JohnDre Jennings

JohnDre Jennings, Executive Director

Testimony - Senate Bill 818 R. Altman UMMC.pdf

Uploaded by: Samuel Burris

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 818
State Center – Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group**

Budget & Taxation Committee
March 4, 2026

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 818.

The University of Maryland Medical Center Midtown Campus is proud to serve as an anchor institution in West Baltimore. For generations, we have provided high-quality health care services while working alongside community partners to strengthen economic opportunity, neighborhood vitality, and overall community well-being.

Senate Bill 818 emphasizes ongoing engagement and transparency throughout the planning and development process. Long-term projects of this scale require trust, collaboration, and consistent communication among developers, state agencies, anchor institutions, and residents.

As an anchor institution located in close proximity to State Center, Midtown Campus understands that redevelopment efforts must advance both economic growth and community well-being. Thoughtful development can:

- Expand employment pathways for local residents
- Increase access to services and amenities
- Strengthen neighborhood stability
- Enhance long-term health and equity outcomes

State Center represents a significant opportunity to catalyze inclusive growth in Baltimore City; an opportunity that should be approached intentionally, transparently, and with sustained community partnership.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to strengthening Baltimore communities.

For more information, please contact
Rebecca A. Altman RN, MBA
Senior Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer
University of Maryland Medical Center Midtown Campus
Email: rebecca.altman@umm.edu

SB 818 - DGS SWA Testimony - State Center.pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA



Wes Moore, Governor | Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor | Atif Chaudhry, Secretary

Senate Bill 818 - State Center - Development - Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group

Position: Support with Amendments

Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 4, 2026

From: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Department of General Services (DGS) supports Senate Bill 818 with amendments developed collaboratively with the bill sponsor.

This legislation would ensure that the redevelopment of State Center includes key components of structured community engagement and plans for local employment and economic benefits for the community surrounding the State Center site in Baltimore.

The 28-acre State Center site is strategically located between two major transit stations, the State Center Metro Subway station and the Cultural Center Light Rail station, and is close to Baltimore Penn Station, making the site an ideal location for transit-oriented development. Through an interagency agreement between DGS, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), the State has engaged a consultant team to evaluate the most effective strategy for bringing the State Center site to market and securing a development partner to be obtained in a future solicitation.

This legislation will facilitate this work by establishing a newly constituted Advisory Group with which state agencies and developers contracting with the State must engage throughout the planning and development process. Further, the bill specifies that contracts for planning and development must include provisions that require 1) a comprehensive local hiring plan, 2) an economic improvement plan that includes goals for the use of minority- and women-owned and locally owned businesses, and 3) a community benefit agreement.

Technical amendments, consistent with the goals and objectives of the bill as introduced, have been developed collaboratively with the bill sponsor through input from DGS and MDOT. The amendments address the bill's terms and conditions pertaining to the alignment and consistency of federal law within the realm of potential public funding requirements and the proposed parameters for the identification of applicable groups within the advisory group.

DGS looks forward to completing the process of relocating state agencies from the State Center complex to other downtown Baltimore locations and to the successful transformational redevelopment of the State Center complex.

For these reasons, DGS respectfully requests a favorable report, with the sponsor's amendments, on SB 818.

Contact: John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Government and Legislative Affairs,
(410) 260-2908 (O), (667) 434-0008 (M), john.woolums@maryland

SB0818 - LOS - TSO - State Center - Development -

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FWA

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 818 – State Center – Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) respectfully submits the following letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 818.

SB 818 establishes a State Center Advisory Group (Advisory Group) and defines the composition, roles and responsibilities regarding the redevelopment of State Center. MDOT appreciates the intent of the legislation and agrees that meaningful community engagement, transparency, and accountability are important components of advancing the redevelopment of this significant State asset.

MDOT has coordinated with the Department of General Services (DGS) and other partners regarding potential revisions to the bill. Those provisions include clarifications to the structure and role of the Advisory Group and help to define its participation in the project. MDOT looks forward to continued collaboration with DGS, the bill sponsor, and stakeholders to advance the goals of this bill.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the committee consider this information and amendment proposal during its deliberation on Senate Bill 818.

Respectfully submitted,

David Zaidain
Chief, Real Estate and Transit-Oriented
Development
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1050

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090