

ANTONIO HAYES

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Legislative District 40



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 818 - State Center – Development – Contract, Plan Requirements, and Advisory Group

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

For the record, I am Senator Antonio Hayes, and I am pleased 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