

Testimony in Favor of SB 770: Establishment of Maryland's Future Board

Jonathon Dworkin, Executive Director of the NewDEAL Forum

Good afternoon Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is **Jonathon Dworkin**, and I serve as **Executive Director of the NewDEAL Forum**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 770 and the Maryland's Future Board.

The NewDEAL Forum is a national organization dedicated to developing and advocating for **innovative state and local policy solutions** that expand opportunity and make government work better. By fostering collaboration among elected officials, policy experts, and the private sector, the Forum addresses the biggest issues facing communities across the country -- the cost of living, education, climate change, and more. We're proud to work with many Maryland legislators, including Senator Ferguson, as well as with Comptroller Lierman as part of our sister organization -- NewDEAL Leaders.

We believe great leadership means understanding the ways the world is changing, having a plan for how to empower people amid this change, and having the ability to implement that plan. The forces shaping this nation's future, and Maryland's future -- forces like technological disruption, demographic change, and global competition -- demand **stepping back from day-to-day issues to focus on intentional, forward-looking planning**. Yet we see how often state policymaking is driven by the urgency of the moment, whether it is an immediate crisis, the next budget cycle, or the next election. That pattern stifles progress.

In examining the history of U.S. innovation in their recent book *Abundance*, the journalists Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson write about Bell Labs -- the research and development arm of AT&T in the mid-twentieth century that was responsible for inventions like the first transistor and the first practical solar cell. They observe that creating a culture of innovation means creating an

environment where people can take risks on new ideas. As one researcher of Bell Labs' success says, their formula was to "hire the smartest people, give them space and time to work, and make sure that they talk to each other."

Government also needs to create a space for smart people to think outside the box about the challenges and opportunities of the future -- of the next five, ten and twenty years. As we witness rapid advances in artificial intelligence creating disruptions and opportunities that were not on the legislative agenda a few years ago, the need for this approach has never been clearer.

That's why SB 770 is so important.

It creates a structure designed to think beyond the short term, and taps into diverse perspectives outside of government -- from business, labor, academia, technology, and the nonprofit sector -- to identify emerging trends and develop strategic recommendations that position Maryland to lead.

There is a famous quote by hockey great Wayne Gretzky: "Skate where the puck is going, not where it has been." In the same way, the **Maryland's Future Board would look forward, and focus on empowering Marylanders to take advantage of what the future will bring.**

As a Maryland resident who is part of an organization engaging in state policy across the country, I've seen the results of planning ahead and investing boldly. States that succeed don't just respond to change; they shape it. SB 770 gives Maryland a tool to do exactly that and to prepare Marylanders for the next generation. It is time to move to where the puck will be. Thank you for your time and consideration.