



March 9, 2026

**RE: Favorable Support – Senate Bill 539
Department of Social and Economic Mobility – Workforce Opportunities
Grant Program and Fund**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce and the more than 700 businesses/organizations we represent across the region, we respectfully submit this letter in **support of Senate Bill 539**. This legislation establishes the Workforce Opportunities Grant Program to support the planning and execution of workforce events and job fairs that connect Maryland employers with job seekers.

Workforce availability remains one of the most significant challenges facing employers across Maryland and particularly in Harford County. Businesses of all sizes continue to report difficulty finding qualified workers, while many job seekers struggle to identify clear pathways into meaningful employment. SB 539 provides a practical and targeted approach to bridging this gap by supporting organizations that convene employers, training providers, and job seekers through workforce events and job fairs. These events create direct connections that often lead to immediate hiring opportunities and long-term career pathways.

The creation of the Workforce Opportunities Grant Fund will help ensure that nonprofit organizations, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, and other partners have the resources necessary to host impactful workforce engagement initiatives. By investing in these connections, Maryland strengthens its talent pipeline while supporting economic growth and business sustainability. The program’s structure—including competitive grants and reporting requirements—also ensures accountability and measurable outcomes.

For Harford County employers, workforce recruitment and retention remain critical priorities. Many local businesses—from manufacturing and logistics to healthcare, hospitality, and small retail—benefit directly from workforce fairs and industry-focused hiring events. Support for these initiatives allows communities to respond to local workforce needs while helping residents access quality employment opportunities close to home.

The Harford County Chamber strongly believes that workforce development and economic development are inseparable. Strategic investments that connect people to jobs support businesses, strengthen families, and contribute to Maryland’s overall economic competitiveness.

**FY 26 Board of Directors
Officers**

Chair: Chris Stone
E-Moxie
Chair Elect: Monica Worrell
APG Federal Credit Union
Immediate Past Chair:
Brienne Baccaro Norris
Weyrich, Cronin, & Sorra
Vice Chair of Finance: Mike Maxwell
Lee Tessier
Vice Chair of Administration: Meghan Jack
MedStar Health

Members at Large

Mike Ray
SURVICE Engineering
Len Parrish
Gemcraft Homes/New Freedom Land Development

Board Members

Tracy Batman
Veritech
PJ Craig
Harford Community Action Agency
Ryan Del Gallo
The Del Gallo Group
Anthony DiPaula
DiPaula Law
Dr. Theresa Felder
Harford Community College
Steve Overbay
Harford County Office of Economic Development
Terry Grant
Katz Abosch
Andy Guckert
M&T Bank
Mary Hastler
Harford County Public Library
Sarah Karantonis
University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health
Claudia Nachtigal
The Highlands School
Chanel Brooks
Baltimore Gas & Electric
Ron Fisher
Harford County Caucus of African America Leaders
Fisher Financial
Robert Wehland
Freedom Federal Credit Union

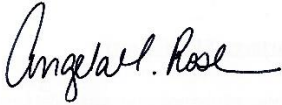
President/CEO

Angela Rose

For these reasons, the Harford County Chamber of Commerce respectfully urges the committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 539.**

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to strengthening Maryland's workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela M. Rose". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular background.

Angela M. Rose
President & CEO
Harford County Chamber of Commerce

