



Senate Bill 539

Position: Favorable

Committee: Senate Finance

Date: March 11, 2026

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (“Maryland Chamber”) is a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth and opportunity for all Marylanders.

Senate Bill 539 makes a targeted and strategic investment facilitate employment across Maryland. At a time when workforce access is consistently cited as a top concern among employers, this legislation provides a practical and immediate solution by directly connecting jobseekers with businesses at no cost to employers.

More than 75% of CEOs identify talent availability as the primary factor influencing business growth decisions. In Maryland, employers continue to report difficulty finding workers, limiting their ability to expand operations and create new opportunities. Structured, well-supported job fairs offer a direct mechanism to close that gap by expediting hiring and fostering real-time connections between employers and qualified candidates.

Recent economic indicators underscore the urgency of this initiative. While Maryland’s employment growth rose between 1.5% and 3% monthly in 2024, growth in 2025 has fallen below 1% per month. Additionally, Maryland ranked 45th nationally for domestic migration from July 2023 to July 2024, losing more than 18,000 residents. Creating immediate pathways to employment is essential to retaining our workforce and strengthening economic stability.

Maryland is home to outstanding academic institutions and nationally recognized workforce development programs. The state leads the nation in academic R&D spending and ranks 18th in industrial R&D. Senate Bill 539 ensures that this talent is connected with meaningful employment opportunities.

The success of the November 1, 2024, job fair hosted at United Therapeutics in Silver Spring demonstrates the effectiveness of this model. That event attracted hundreds of job seekers, brought together more than 25 employers and service providers, and resulted in same-day hiring. By replicating that success across districts statewide, Maryland can generate direct and immediate economic opportunity for thousands of constituents.

Senate Bill 539 is a modest investment with significant potential returns for businesses, workers, and communities across our state. **For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 539.**

