



# POSITION STATEMENT

## TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

### HOUSE BILL 854 - HIGHER EDUCATION – COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS - ESTABLISHMENT *ALSO SB 766*

**DONALD C. FRY**  
**PRESIDENT & CEO, GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

#### **Position: Support**

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is an independent non-partisan regional business advocacy organization of more than 500 businesses—large, medium and small—educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 59-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability. It is an organization that prides itself on advocating for changes in public policies that strengthen the business climate while improving the quality of life.

The Greater Baltimore Committee **supports** House Bill 854 - Higher Education – College Admissions Outreach Program for High-Achieving Students - Establishment.

HB 854 would establish the College Admissions Outreach Program for High-Achieving Students which would require the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Maryland State Department of Education, in collaboration with county boards of education, superintendents and institutions of higher education to jointly administer the program. The program among other things would provide information on the college admission requirements and process, application fee waivers, and additional materials. The students are encouraged to apply to at least 4 institutions of higher learning.

The program would ideally encourage more high-achieving 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who qualify for the Guaranteed Access Grant to enroll in colleges that are a good academic and financial fit. This would in turn help Maryland produce a more educated workforce to meet the demands of our knowledge-based economy. The outreach provided by this proposed legislation connects promising high school students to Maryland institutions of higher learning.

In 2010 the Greater Baltimore Committee published *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report that names eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. One of the pillars deals specifically with state investments in education and the workforce:

**Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland's business needs.** Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all

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levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.

The Greater Baltimore Committee **requests a favorable report on House Bill 854.**

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