



POSITION STATEMENT

**TESTIMONY
SUBMITTED TO THE
EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 876
EDUCATION – SUMMER CAREER ACADEMY PILOT PROGRAM
*ALSO HB 811***

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

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is an independent non-partisan 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 strongly supports efforts to provide students with the workforce skills and training necessary to secure sustainable employment following the completion of their high school education. It is of particular importance that access to workforce skills and training is provided for those students who are struggling to meet the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards in high school

SB 876 provides a valuable service by establishing a summer career academy pilot program to address the challenges confronting that portion of the student population. The pilot program proposed by the legislation and the information gathered from the reporting requirements will create a foundation from which additional steps can be developed to address workforce skills and training.

In 2010, the Greater Baltimore Committee issued a report entitled Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland. The report highlights education and workforce skills and training as one of the key components to a strong competitive environment. A former Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development summed it up best saying:

“We need to be able to show businesses that we are investing in the workforce...It’s low cost and has a tremendous impact.”

SB 876 is a sound first step to provide students who are struggling academically to obtain the necessary skills and training needed to enhance the state’s workforce in the future.

For the reasons and rationale stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 876.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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