



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 221—COMMISSION ON TAX POLICY, REFORM, AND FAIRNESS

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

POSITION: Support w/Amendments

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of 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 60-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 with amendments House Bill 221 - Commission on Tax Policy, Reform, and Fairness.

House Bill 221 would create a public and private sector commission to study the current tax and revenue structure of the State of Maryland so that it may make recommendations regarding the promotion of job growth, economic development, fairness, a reliable revenue stream and a business friendly environment.

In June 2013, the Greater Baltimore Committee held its inaugural Chesapeake Conference of CEOs, bringing together private sector business leaders from across the Baltimore region in an effort to create an action-oriented strategy on how to strengthen our state's competitiveness. The top recommendation that emerged from the conference was the creation of a commission with a mission similar to the one described in this legislative proposal: to study the state's tax structure and spending process and develop recommendations to improve competitiveness.

The GBC commission was formed in early 2014 and included a number of prominent business leaders, former elected officials, and former state officials who possessed a deep, internal understanding of the inner workings of the state's budget, tax, and spending processes. Over the course of the year, the commission studied the majority of the issues this new commission would study, and is in the process of formulating final recommendations.

For that reason, and to ensure that this newly formed commission is fairly representative of all regions of the state, the GBC recommends that the following commission member be added to the legislation:

- A representative of the Greater Baltimore Committee

With the above modification incorporated into the language of the bill, House Bill 221 could assist in the ongoing process of improving Maryland's competitive tax structure by adding to the growing body of knowledge surrounding the numerous processes that go into state budgeting.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report of House Bill 221 with the amendments outlined in this Position Statement.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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