



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 942 – APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROGRAM – APPRENTICESHIP MARYLAND

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

POSITION: Support

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 in the region.

The Greater Baltimore Committee supports House Bill 942 – Apprenticeship Pilot Program – Apprenticeship Maryland.

For many students in the United States, the recipe for post-graduation success that is most often relayed to them from their parents and teachers is to go to a good college and potentially even pursue post-baccalaureate studies. While many well-paying jobs do require a college degree and beyond, in recent years much attention has been paid to the emergence of a new sector of jobs that require less than a college degree but more education or training than a high school diploma. These “middle skill” jobs will account for nearly 40% of all job growth in the nation over the next few years with 2.5 million new middle skill jobs expected to be added to the workforce by 2017. In a 2013 report, the Opportunity Collaborative – a consortium of local governments, state agencies, universities, and nonprofit organizations – noted that between 2012 and 2020, middle-skill occupations will account for nearly 36,000 job openings.

These projections present a great opportunity for Maryland. While our state boasts one of the most educated workforces in the nation, one third of the Baltimore region’s workforce is comprised of individuals who either do not have a high school diploma or have only a high school diploma or equivalent. Without the added skills training and education required by many middle-skill job occupations, these individuals will not have the opportunity to take advantage of the boom of middle-skill jobs that will be happening in our state.

One way that individuals can receive skills training is through apprenticeship programs. Maryland has an apprenticeship program but it is small in size and generally only relates to specific industries. According to a February 2104 report of the Task Force to Study Economic Development and Apprenticeships, Maryland’s registered apprenticeship system trains less than 8,000 apprentices and 82% of them are in the construction trades.

House Bill 942 seeks to create a broader skills training program aimed at high school students called Apprenticeship Maryland. Through this proposed program, high school juniors and seniors would complete at least 450 hours of work-based training and one year of classroom instruction in a specific career track. At the end of the program they would receive a skills training certificate, which is critical to securing many of the middle-skill jobs referenced above.

This program is a great way to harness the potential of Maryland’s rich human capital by providing individuals with the skills they need to succeed in the middle-skill jobs of the future. This proposed pilot program is consistent with recommendations set forth in the recent Economic Development & Business Climate Commission and in last year’s report of the aforementioned task force.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report of House Bill 942.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org