Message to Members

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) Board of Directors received a visit last week from Governor Larry Hogan. During the meeting, the Board heard from the Governor on his legislative and budgetary priorities for the current 2017 session of the Maryland General Assembly. The Governor said that his package of bills this year reflects the simple message that he wants Maryland to be a more competitive and business friendly state.

Governor Hogan told the Board that he has made improving Maryland's business climate one of his top priorities during his first two years in office. As an example of these efforts to encourage more business activity in Maryland, the Governor said he has created a commission to identify regulations that are outdated, burdensome or unnecessary.

After the Governor's remarks, he took questions from the GBC Board of Directors. During the Q&A session, the Governor encouraged Board members to get involved with their legislators on issues of business competitiveness. He also touched on issues ranging from the April 2015 unrest in Baltimore, diversification of Maryland's economy, relocation of FBI headquarters, Maglev, infrastructure improvements, school funding formulas, manufacturing, community colleges and job training.

Engagements with Maryland leaders, such as the Governor, helps the GBC learn about the important issues facing the business community. Last month, the GBC Board had a similar opportunity during a meeting and discussion with Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh. At both meetings, Board
members were able to share their priorities while learning how the GBC, on behalf of its members, can have a positive affect on important issues facing the Greater Baltimore region, including business climate, transportation, workforce, public safety and education.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Donald C. Fry
President and CEO

GBC Priority Legislation This Week

The GBC weighed in directly on several pieces of legislation that received hearings this week in the Maryland General Assembly:

**SB 404/HB 398 -- Labor and Employment - Equal Pay - Job Announcement and Salary History Information Disclosures (Oppose)**

This bill would require employers that have 15 or more employees to include a minimum rate of pay in job announcements, including a full disclosure regarding how pay for the position is calculated, if there is overtime eligibility and if any allowances will be claimed by the employer. The risk of imposing unnecessary restrictions on business, even during the employment process, detracts from the ability to compete and makes Maryland a less attractive place to operate or grow a company.

**HB 459 -- Higher Education - Adult Correctional Institutions - Job Training and Education (Support)**

This bill seeks to assist returning citizens find meaningful employment by providing post-secondary education and workforce training programs. In effort to improve opportunities for returning citizens, the GBC-4ed Coalition for a Second Chance released a report, *Opening Doors to a Second Chance*, in December. The report concluded that addressing improvement in job training and employment skills are needed to help returning citizens obtain employment and reduce recidivism.


This bill would prohibit institutions of higher education from inquiring about an applicant’s criminal history when applying to a college or university. The GBC recognizes that all people, regardless of their criminal background, should be given an opportunity to matriculate to higher education.

**HB 399 – Student Debt Relief Act of 2017 (Support)**

This bill would allow provides college and graduate school students with student debt relief. Reducing student debt will

http://campaignr20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1104450135336&ca=82dc86f-309f-480a-bdc2-b657c7ef1d81
help Maryland improve the long-term economic health of its economy.

SB 437 – Public Health - Expensive Drugs - Manufacturer Reporting and Drug Price Transparency Advisory Committee (Oppose)
This bill would require the manufacturer of a drug priced over $2,500 sold in Maryland to file an annual report that includes proprietary information, intellectual property and other information not currently required of other industries. Requirements such as these harm innovation and requires biopharmaceutical manufacturers to reveal information that is burdensome and creates competitive issues for Maryland's innovators in bioscience.

SB 510 – Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Nolle Prosequi (Support)
This bill would repeal a three-year waiting period generally applicable to filing a petition for expungement based on a nolle prosequi. Nolle prosequi, meaning "will no longer prosecute," is a formal motion by a State’s Attorney indicating that a charge or charges will not be prosecuted. Passage of this bill would help returning citizens expunge criminal records and open doors to opportunities for employment.

SB 4 – Minority Business Enterprises - Program Participation - Requirements and Reauthorization (Support)
This bill specifies what constitutes as good cause for the removal of certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) serving as subcontractors on awarded procurement contracts. This bill would help promote entrepreneurship for small, minority and women-owned businesses.

SB 335 – Career Apprenticeship Opportunity Act of 2017 (Support)
This bill would require that the State Board of Education set goals establishing the percentage of high school graduates that must complete each career and technical education program or earn industry-recognized occupational or skill credentials. Apprenticeship programs which combine classroom instruction with on-the-job training are recognized as an important part of meeting Maryland's current and future workforce needs.

SB 526 – Baltimore City - Property Tax Credit - Rental Discount for Baltimore City Police Officers (Support)
This bill would authorize the Mayor of Baltimore City and the Baltimore City Council to grant a property tax credit to property owners of an apartment complex that provide a rental discount to Baltimore City police officers. It is important that more police officers are able to live in Baltimore City, which helps reduce crime and create increased citizen satisfaction.

HB 381 – Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew (Oppose)
This bill would prohibit a train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight and sharing the same rail corridor as passenger trains from being operated in the State unless it has at least two crew members. The GBC is in opposition to this bill because technological progress has allowed for single-person railroad crews to be used safely throughout the world for freight and rail service. Decreasing freight costs also helps the competitiveness of the Port of Baltimore.
Only One Vacancy Remains in Maryland General Assembly

Recently, there has been a flurry of new appointments to vacancies in the Maryland General Assembly. Many of these vacancies were created by the election of Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh, who vacated her seat to run, and subsequent changes to the Baltimore City Delegation in Annapolis. The only vacancy that remains is a House seat in Baltimore City’s District 41. New legislators are:

- Delegate Nathaniel Oaks (D) replaces Senator Lisa Gladden in District 41. Lisa Gladden retired.
- Bilal Ali (D) replaces Delegate Jill Carter in District 41. Jill Carter took a position in Mayor Pugh’s administration.
- Jheanelle Wilkins (D) replaces Delegate Will Smith in District 20. Will Smith is now the Senator in District 20.
- Jazz Lewis (D) replaces Delegate Michael Vaughn in District 24. Michael Vaughn resigned his seat.

GBC 2017 Legislative Priorities

For reference during the session, please take a look at the GBC’s 2017 Legislative Priorities, which serve as the foundation of our efforts in Annapolis and throughout the year. These priorities communicate to policymakers specific actions or recommendations that policymakers can undertake to create jobs and improve the business climate.

Upcoming Dates of Interest

On February 27, join us for the GBC’s Newsmaker Breakfast: The Future of the Preakness and Pimlico Race Track with Maryland Delegate Samuel I. (Sandy) Rosenberg and Thomas E. Kelso, Chairman, Maryland Stadium Authority. The event begins at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC office, 111 S. Calvert St., Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.

Future Newsmaker Breakfast programs include: Al Hutchinson, President and CEO of Visit Baltimore on March 16 and Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. (Jack) Young on April 19.