GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE
Regional business leaders creating a better tomorrow...today.

GBC In The News:
January, February and March 2017

Media highlights of the GBC in January, February and March 2017.

The Greater Baltimore Committee frequently receives requests from local and national media outlets to provide insight, comment or perspective on a pressing topic or issue. Reporters, editors and producers solicit our input because the GBC provides the unique private sector angle and enjoys a reputation for providing informed and well thought out perspectives on important issues facing our state, region and city.

Additionally, as part of the effort to be an influential voice in the region, I also publish regular commentaries in The Daily Record and other media outlets.

To ensure that you and other members are kept informed of the GBC's presence in the media, we are pleased to provide you with this edition of GBC in the News.

As always, I welcome your feedback and questions.

Sincerely,

Donald C. Fry
President & CEO

JANUARY 2017

Don Fry Commentaries

January 20 The Daily Record: The session's top business priorities
The Maryland General Assembly session opened January 11 and, with the governor’s recent submission of the proposed 2018 fiscal year budget, legislative rhetoric and activity is moving into high gear. With battle lines forming, it’s worth taking a look at the GBC's 2017 priorities. Read the commentary.

January 13 MPT's State Circle: Paid Sick Leave
Watch GBC President and CEO Don Fry weigh in on paid sick leave. (See minute mark 5:22).

January 4 Baltimore Business Journal: The Year Ahead
Looking into the proverbial crystal ball is always risky business especially in the changing world of politics, but it’s safe to say that 2017 appears to be shaping up as a busy and interesting year
on a number of business and economic fronts for Greater Baltimore and Maryland. Read the commentary.

GBC Events

January 23 Baltimore Business Journal: GBC Legislative Forum
Citing a need to help keep Maryland businesses competitive regionally and nationally, Delegate Dereck E. Davis said he plans to file a bill by the end of this week that would pre-empt local governments from passing minimum wage bills by making wages and benefits the domain of the state. Delegate Davis made the announcement at a legislative forum hosted by the Greater Baltimore Committee on Monday. "We support legislation that would pre-empt local governments from making changes on wage and hourly types of situations," said Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the GBC. "We think those types of issues are certainly better handled at the state level." Read the article.

January 23 Baltimore Business Journal: GBC Legislative Forum
Keiffer Mitchell, a Senior Advisor to Governor Hogan, said Monday a mandatory paid leave bill is likely to pass. He told business leaders at the Greater Baltimore Committee's legislative forum that Hogan wanted to make sure there was a proposal that is "less onerous on businesses." Delegate Dereck Davis and Delegate Nicholas Kipke, who also spoke at the forum, agreed a bill will likely pass during this year's legislative session. They expressed a hope that lawmakers from both sides of the aisle will reach a compromise. Read the article.

Additional Media Coverage

January 23 The Daily Record: Hiring Eligibility
Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the GBC, said Senate Bill 55, which would prevent employers in certain industries from being held liable based on evidence of past criminal conduct if the employee has completed probation, falls in line with the organization's goal to make it less burdensome for businesses to hire returning citizens. When employers were interviewed about their feelings on hiring people with criminal records, liability was a common question, according to Fry. "It's a bill we think highlights an issue that the business community has," he said. The GBC supports the bill as-is but also would like to see the types of employers expanded, added Fry, who called the legislation "a great first step." Read the article.

January 19 The Baltimore Sun: Police Reforms
Don Fry, President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said the group and its business network "stand ready to work with the mayor and be a problem solver." He said it is too early to say specifically what contributions would be possible. "We will look at the situation and see what the needs are," Fry said. "We want to be part of the solution to the extent we can." Read the article.

January 10 Baltimore Business Journal: Maryland General Assembly
Because of the state's budget constraints, Greater Baltimore Committee President and CEO Donald C. Fry doesn't believe legislators will be quick to approve any new projects or tax credit programs. Instead, he said the GBC will be watching to ensure existing incentives remain intact. Fry said he will also be following how spending cuts affect education funding because of the importance of the kindergarten through 12th grade pipeline for businesses. Read the article.

FEBRUARY 2017

Don Fry Commentaries

February 27 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum wage, arena studies
Much of Greater Baltimore Committee President and CEO Donald C. Fry’s time these days is spent focused on bills in front of the General Assembly, as well as defeating a proposal that would increase the city’s minimum wage. Listen to the podcast.

February 17 The Daily Record: Cash Bail
What’s really needed now is for state legislators to enact meaningful cash bail reform in the current session of the Maryland General Assembly to ensure financial status isn’t what lands
people behind bars before they have had a trial. Why? Simply put, the cash bail system for such defendants is unfair and unjust. The problem is particularly acute in Baltimore City. Read the commentary.

February 6 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum Wage
Minimum wage was intended to be just that - a minimum wage that an employer paid. This served to aid individuals entering the labor market for the first time or employees that possessed limited education and job skills. We frequently hear that employees can't support a family on minimum wage. Unfortunately, we lose sight of the basic fact that minimum wage was never intended to be a family sustaining wage or a living wage. It was a tool to provide opportunity for those whose education and skills were evolving and served as an entry level for a potential career. Read the commentary.

GBC Events

February 27 Baltimore Business Journal: Newsmaker Breakfast - Future of the Preakness
Maryland Delegate Samuel I. "Sandy" Rosenberg was part of a three-man panel Monday at the GBC's Newsmaker Breakfast along with Thomas Kelso, Chairman of the Maryland Stadium Authority, and Tim Ritvo, Chief Operating Officer of the Stronach Group. The three discussed the study that was released February 24 that called for massive renovations of Pimlico, but not a rebuild of the out-of-date facility. Ritvo said Stronach Group was disappointed with the results of the first phase of a planned two-part study because it didn't address the company's main concerns, such as adding skyboxes and fixing sight lines. Read the article.

February 27 The Baltimore Sun: Newsmaker Breakfast - Future of the Preakness
Though the Maryland Stadium Authority just released a study of potential renovations at Pimlico Race Course, the most significant questions about the home of the Preakness - including the optimal way to redevelop it and how to pay for the project - remain to be answered, the authority's chairman said Monday. "This was an important step, but there was some disappointment with the limitations," Chairman Thomas E. Kelso said at a breakfast with members of the Greater Baltimore Committee. He's eager to move forward with a more comprehensive second phase of the study. Read the article.

February 27 WBAL News Radio 1090: Newsmaker Breakfast - Future of the Preakness
What does the future hold for the Preakness and Pimlico Race Course. That was the focus of Monday's Greater Baltimore Committee Newsmaker Breakfast at the Inner Harbor. At the event attended by more than 50 Baltimore business leaders at the GBC offices, the COO of Pimlico Race Course's ownership tells WBAL NewsRadio 1090's Scott Wykoff while he'd prefer a total rebuild of the historic home of the Preakness Stakes, executives are happy there's a road map. Listen to the story.

Additional Media Coverage

February 8 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum Wage
Mayor Catherine Pugh's comments Wednesday echo ones made by Donald C. Fry, the President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee. In a column written for the BBJ, Fry said increasing the minimum wage would put employers in the city at a "competitive disadvantage to surrounding counties." Read the article.

February 6 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum Wage
Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said increasing the minimum wage to $15 per hour would result in Baltimore being an "island" surrounded by other jurisdictions that have no plans to raise the minimum wage. "If passed, this bill would place Baltimore City at a serious competitive disadvantage," Fry said. It has the potential to result in job losses and businesses leaving the city. Read the article.

February 6 The Baltimore Sun: Minimum Wage
Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the pro-business Greater Baltimore Committee, said the legislation would make the city an "island" surrounded by other jurisdictions that have no plans to raise the minimum wage. "If passed, this bill would place Baltimore City at a serious competitive disadvantage," Fry said in a statement. "It has the potential to result in job losses and businesses leaving the city." He pointed to testimony given to the council last year from more than 30 business owners, employees, disability service providers and others who said a $15 minimum wage would harm their businesses and stifle job creation. Read the article.
February 6 The Daily Record: Minimum Wage
The Greater Baltimore Committee, which advocates for business interests in the area, opposes the legislation and expressed concern about the potential impact on the city's economy. "If passed, this bill would place Baltimore City at a serious competitive disadvantage. It has the potential to result in job losses and businesses leaving the city," said Donald C. Fry, the GBC's President and CEO, said in a statement. Read the article.

MARCH 2017

Don Fry Commentaries

March 28 Baltimore Business Journal: Proposed Federal Budget
Many argue that President Trump's budget proposal is "dead on arrival" in Congress. In all likelihood that may hold true. But these are different times in Washington. Republicans hold majorities in the House and Senate and there is a desire for trimming federal spending. And so it seems hard to predict where this austere proposal may lead. One thing is clear. If passed as submitted, it would have a significant effect on job growth and Maryland's economy, not to mention the budgets of Baltimore City and the state. Read the commentary.

March 17 The Daily Record: Manufacturing Jobs in Maryland
Manufacturing appears to be an economic growth industry and the opportunity exists for Baltimore and the State of Maryland to take advantage of this job creation trend. Read the commentary.

GBC Events

March 16 Baltimore Business Journal: Newsmaker Breakfast - Visit Baltimore's Al Hutchinson
Al Hutchinson, who came on board at Visit Baltimore as President and CEO in November of last year, spoke at the Greater Baltimore Committee's Newsmaker Breakfast Thursday and said if the convention center doesn't grow, it will not be able to compete with nearby cities for conventions. Read the article.

Additional Media Coverage

March 20 The Baltimore Sun: YouthWorks
Donald C. Fry, President CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said the program benefits both the young people and the employers that hire them. "It's an opportunity for young people to develop skills they don't have traditionally," Fry said. "It's a chance to see what it takes to be in the work force. And it gives businesses an opportunity to see what the future workforce capacity is and what needs to be done to develop that further." Read the article.

Baltimore City Hall

March 24 WBAL-TV: Minimum Wage
Watch GBC President and CEO Don Fry's interview about the March 24 decision by Baltimore Mayor Catherine E. Pugh to veto legislation to raise the minimum wage to $15-per-hour in the city. (1:19 mark)

March 24 The Baltimore Sun: Minimum Wage
The pro-business Greater Baltimore Committee's President and CEO, Don Fry, praised Pugh's decision. The measure "threatened jobs, made Baltimore an island surrounded by counties with lower business costs and hit the city budget with millions of dollars in higher labor costs it simply cannot afford." "The decision was no doubt a difficult one for the mayor," Fry said in a statement. "But this shows real leadership as she stayed true to the priority that Baltimore must remain competitive for growth and jobs." Read the article.

March 24 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum Wage
In a statement, GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry applauded Pugh's decision to veto the legislation, "which would have threatened jobs, made Baltimore an island surrounded by
counties with lower business costs and the hit the city budget with millions of dollars in higher labor costs it simply cannot afford." "The GBC urges the council to support the mayor's veto and move on to other important issues that need the council's full attention," Fry said. Read the article.

March 24 The Daily Record: Minimum Wage
"The Greater Baltimore Committee applauds Mayor Pugh's decision to veto this legislation, which would have threatened jobs, made Baltimore an island surrounded by counties with lower business costs and hit the city budget with millions of dollars in higher labor costs it simply cannot afford," Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said in a statement. "The decision was no doubt a difficult one for the mayor. But this shows real leadership as she stayed true to the priority that Baltimore must remain competitive for growth and jobs." Read the article.

March 23 WBAL-TV: Minimum Wage
In the editorial "Minimum wage hike well-meaning but could be detrimental to city's economic survival," Dan Joerres, President and General Manager of WBAL-TV, said "The Greater Baltimore Committee asserts, "This legislation will place Baltimore at a serious competitive disadvantage, resulting in lost jobs, and additional costs to city businesses."") Listen to the editorial.

March 21 ABC2 WMAR Baltimore: Minimum Wage
Watch GBC President and CEO Don Fry's interview about the March 20 decision by the Baltimore City Council to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage to $15-per-hour in the city. (Second video, :45 mark).

March 21 Fox45 News: Minimum Wage
Watch GBC President and CEO Don Fry's interview about the March 20 decision by the Baltimore City Council to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage to $15-per-hour in the city.

March 21 WBAL-TV: Minimum Wage
Watch GBC President and CEO Don Fry's interview about the March 20 decision by the Baltimore City Council to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage to $15-per-hour in the city. (0:16 mark)

March 21 Baltimore Jewish Times: Minimum Wage
Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, has been one of the loudest critics of the legislation. He said he was "very disappointed in the City Council’s decision" and insisted the mayor reject the measure, citing uncertainties raised by business leaders, cultural institutions, nonprofit organizations and government agencies. "This legislation will place Baltimore at a serious competitive disadvantage, resulting in lost jobs, additional costs to city businesses and employers leaving the city," Fry said. Read the article.

March 20 The Baltimore Sun: Minimum Wage
The influential pro-business Greater Baltimore Committee immediately urged Pugh to veto the bill. Donald C. Fry, the group's President and CEO, said he was "very disappointed in the City Council’s decision to increase the minimum wage despite the concerns expressed by the business community, cultural institutions, nonprofit organizations, and city government agencies." Fry noted a $15 hourly minimum wage would be nearly $5 an hour higher than in surrounding counties. "This legislation will place Baltimore at a serious competitive disadvantage, resulting in lost jobs, additional costs to city businesses, and employers leaving the city," he said. Read the article.

March 20 The Daily Record: Minimum Wage
Groups representing business interests in the city, such as the Greater Baltimore Committee, have strongly opposed the legislation. The city's quasi-public economic development agency, Baltimore Development Corporation has also spoken out against the bill. "The GBC urges Mayor Catherine Pugh to veto this bill to ensure Baltimore does not become an island among neighboring jurisdictions," President and CEO Donald C. Fry said in a statement after the vote. "A veto would also be a fiscally prudent step to avoid a host of difficult decisions elected officials will need to make to pay for the millions of dollars in higher labor costs annually that city government and taxpayers will incur." Read the article.

March 20 Baltimore Business Journal: Minimum Wage
Don Fry, President and CEO of business advocacy organization the Greater Baltimore Committee, has been an outspoken opponent of the measure. He said he was "very disappointed" in Monday's vote and urged the mayor to veto. "This legislation will place Baltimore at a serious competitive disadvantage, resulting in lost jobs, additional costs to city businesses and employers leaving the city," Fry said. Read the article.

March 6 The Baltimore Sun: Minimum Wage
Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the pro-business Greater Baltimore Committee, warned the measure could cause jobs to leave the city for nearby Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties. "Businesses that are unable to overcome the costs associated with the increased minimum wage will have little choice but to close their doors," Fry said. "Businesses that do survive will not have the ability to grow and create jobs as they would otherwise. This is not a threat, just an economic reality that deserves very serious consideration." Read the article.

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