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GBC'S 2018 AGENDA
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MD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
General Assembly Website
Committee Schedule

GBC EVENTS

Message to Members

The deadline to file for the 2018 election in Maryland was February 27, 2018 and there is now a clear picture of the candidates running for office. This year all statewide elected offices, consisting of one U.S. Senate seat, Governor, Attorney General and Comptroller, are up for election. The same holds true for the entire Maryland General Assembly - all 47 Senate seats and 141 House seats are up for election. The primary election will be held on June 26, 2018 and the general election will be held on November 6, 2018.

High turnover looms for the Maryland General Assembly. As it stands now, there will be a minimum of 10 new Senators and 29 new House members. These numbers, which do not take into account legislators who may be defeated in the upcoming elections, are significant. The pre-election turnover is 21.2 percent in the Senate and 20.6 percent in the House. In 2014, the post-election turnover was 21.2 percent in the Senate and 36.9 percent in the House. Additional departures followed as some legislators left to work in the administration of Governor Larry Hogan or Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh. In 2010, there was a 21.2 percent turnover in the Senate but a modest 21.3 percent turnover in the House.
In Baltimore City, where the primary election generally decides elections, we will largely know the makeup of the Senate and House delegations following the June primary. Baltimore City’s Maryland General Assembly delegation consists of five full Senate districts and 16 House members. Of those legislators, none are retiring, but three sitting House members are challenging the Senator in their district. In District 40, Delegate Antonio Hayes is running against Senator Barbara Robinson. In the District 43, Delegate Mary Washington is taking on Senator Joan Carter Conway. Finally, in District 46, Delegate Cory McCray is trying to unseat Senator Nathaniel McFadden. For the Baltimore City delegation, significant change is guaranteed.

Every four years, elections bring about a great deal of transition. New names and faces in the executive and legislative branches will hold sway regarding the creation of policy that affects the Greater Baltimore region. It will be paramount that the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) educate new policymakers on the importance of a strong business climate and create champions for the Greater Baltimore economy.

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

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Donald C. Fry
President and CEO

Clarity for Crime Legislation in the Maryland Senate

The GBC has significantly weighed in on crime-related legislation during the 2018 session. Public safety, the GBC asserts, is the most important issue facing Baltimore City.

Some clarity has surfaced on the Senate vehicle to address violent crime. SB 122 - Criminal Law - Comprehensive Crime Bill of 2018, sponsored by Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chair Robert Zirkin, is moving through the Senate.

The GBC has formally expressed its support of SB 122, which is consistent with the two-pronged approach to public safety that the GBC has been advocating throughout this legislative session. The bill has a strong focus on repeat violent offenders, a significant factor in the violent crime that has plagued Baltimore City in recent years. The bill also provides for increased periods of incarceration for repeat violent offenders convicted of a crime while using a firearm. It also changes a violation of the statute involving firearms from a misdemeanor to a felony.

SB 122, as amended, also includes important language to address some very effective crime prevention approaches, the second strategic prong advanced by the GBC. This includes...
significant funding for community-based programs such as Safe Streets. It also provides for the establishment of a fund to provide grants to promising and evidence-based programs, such as pretrial services and community policing activities, which aim to improve the lives of citizens in under invested high crime areas.

After the bill passes the Senate, it will move to the House of Delegates, which may have other ideas about the best way to proceed. The GBC anticipates, however, that significant crime legislation will pass by the end of the session at midnight on April 9, 2018.

Tax Windfall May Help Fund Future Kirwan Commission Recommendations

Federal tax changes passed by the U.S. Congress have created future revenue windfalls in a number of states, including Maryland. Forecasts estimate that the State will see approximately $433 million in additional revenue in Fiscal Year 2019, which begins on July 1, 2018. Governor Larry Hogan and legislative leaders have introduced separate pieces of legislation to address the prospect of additional revenue.

The Maryland Senate is considering a proposal to return a majority of the windfall to taxpayers, many of whom will see their taxes increase following federal action, but also set aside funds to pay for anticipated increases in education spending. Specifically, the Senate has a bipartisan proposal to increase the standard deduction for State income taxes by $500 for individuals and $1,000 for married couples, while setting aside $200 million in a reserve fund for education spending. It is unclear which direction the House will take. It is certain that this issue will be one of the most important debates in the waning days of the 2018 legislative session.

Setting aside some of the unanticipated revenue is an acknowledgement that unanticipated sources of funding will be needed in anticipation of increased K-12 spending. These increases stem from the work of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, better known as the Kirwan Commission, after its Chairman, Dr. William E. "Brit" Kirwan, former Chancellor of the University System of Maryland. The cost to implement the Kirwan Commission's recommendations is unknown and setting aside money in advance is a strategy to fund those future costs. The Commission, which was formed to study and make recommendations to improve K-12 education and on adequate funding of Maryland's schools, released a preliminary report on February 15, 2018. It will release its final report at the end of 2018.

Upcoming Dates of Interest

On March 21, the GBC is hosting a sold out Newsmaker Breakfast featuring a discussion with Dr. William E. "Brit" Kirwan, Chair of the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, commonly referred to as the Kirwan Commission. Dr. Kirwan will discuss the current ranking of
Maryland schools in the United States and internationally as well as preliminary findings of the Commission. Findings include shortcomings of the funding formulas for the state’s poorer jurisdictions, needed improvements for recruiting and keeping teachers and more support for at-risk students. This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC Office, 111 S. Calvert St., Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.

On March 22, the GBC is hosting a Breakfast Briefing entitled, "Women in The Workplace, Women in Leadership," featuring Jamie Fontaine-Gansell, an advocacy communications expert who will discuss leadership and corporate culture strategies that develop and nurture women leaders and increase organizational performance, and Michelle M. McGeogh, Of Counsel at Ballard Spahr LLP. The speakers will discuss the prevention of workplace harassment and the encouragement of gender diversity and its many benefits to both your workplace culture and your bottom line. This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC Office, 111 S. Calvert St., Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.

Join the GBC on May 14 for its 63rd Annual Meeting, the state’s premier business event of the year. To become a sponsor, please contact Lisa Byrd, Director of Events and Business Development, at 410-727-2820.