



## GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

*Regional business leaders creating a better tomorrow...today.*



April 17, 2018

## State House Update

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### MD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[General Assembly Website](#)

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### GBC EVENTS

## Message to Members

### 2018 Session by the Numbers

The 2018 Maryland General Assembly concluded its 90-day 2018 legislative session Sine Die on Monday, April 9, much the way it started: with veto overrides. In January, the first order of business was to override Governor Larry Hogan's veto of the Paid Sick Leave Bill that passed during the 2017 session. During the final week of session the General Assembly overrode two gubernatorial vetoes related to education and school construction funding.

With 3,101 bills introduced, the session marked a 215 bill increase over the 2017 session. Election years tend to be quieter when measured by controversial legislation, but this year's session was anything but quiet. The GBC monitored or took a position on 333 bills, also an increase over the previous session.

### Budget Bill

This year, the budget passed with bipartisan support in the House and Senate. The Fiscal Year 2019 Operating Budget totals \$44.6 billion, which is 2.2 percent higher than Fiscal

**April 26, 2018**  
Maryland Gubernatorial Forum

**May 14, 2018**  
Annual Meeting

**May 23, 2018**  
Newsmaker Breakfast:  
Baltimore's Housing Options:  
Neighborhood Strengths and  
Hidden Gems with Annie Milli,  
Executive Director, Live  
Baltimore

**July 17, 2018**  
GBC Golf Classic

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**September 13, 2018**  
Economic Outlook Conference

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**October 11, 2018**  
Transportation Summit

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**December 5, 2018**  
Mayor's Business Recognition  
Awards Luncheon

Event and sponsorship  
information:  
Lisa Byrd at 410-727-2820

#### STAFF CONTACTS

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Year 2018. The budget achieves the Spending Affordability Committee's dual goal of leaving a fund balance of at least \$100 million and eliminating the structural shortfall in fiscal 2019. The final budget leaves a General Fund balance of \$201.4 million, a Rainy Day Fund balance of \$879 million and produces a structural surplus of \$158 million. In addition, the final budget allocated \$200 million in income tax revenue to a special fund to support the implementation of the anticipated recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission). Due to federal tax law changes, Maryland expects to see an increased \$400 million in income tax revenue, according to a study by the Comptroller's Office. Funds were also set aside to increase the standard deduction in Maryland as a partial offset to this expected increased revenue.

#### Gubernatorial Vetoes

The legislature sent several bills to the Governor in the final days of March to ensure that any vetoes would be received prior to the end of session. On April 4, the Governor vetoed two of these bills: [Senate Bill 639](#) -- Education - Public School Personnel - Disciplinary Hearing Procedures; and [House Bill 1783](#) -- 21st Century School Facilities Act.

The legislature responded by voting to override these vetoes the next day. Senate Bill 639 allows teachers and other certificated school employees to choose arbitration instead of a hearing before the local school board when termination is recommended.

House Bill 1783 makes comprehensive changes to public school construction funding and approval processes in the State, including: (1) altering the name, composition, and role of the Interagency Committee on School Construction; (2) requiring periodic public school facilities assessments; (3) streamlining the State approval process for school construction projects; and (4) providing at least \$400 million for public school construction annually as soon as practicable, including \$10 million for school safety improvements. The bill was vetoed by the Governor because of the changes to the process, which eliminate the Board of Public Works as the final arbiter of school construction funding.

#### Upcoming Elections

Looking ahead, the 2019 session will be quite different than this year. The entire Maryland General Assembly, consisting of 47 Senate seats and 141 House seats, is up for election. The same holds true for Maryland's three statewide elected offices - Governor/Lt. Governor, Comptroller and Attorney General. A number of prominent legislators are retiring, including the powerful Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Chair, Senator Edward Kasemeyer. At a minimum, there will be 11 new Senators and 29 new Delegates in 2019 before any votes are cast in the June 26 primary election or the November 6 general election.

#### Looking Ahead

Through the work of its committees and task forces, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) will spend the interim continuing to develop ideas for legislation and action-oriented approaches to solving policy issues.



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

Sincerely,

Donald C. Fry  
President and CEO



## GBC Legislative Priorities for 2018 Session

Every year, prior to the start of the legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly, the GBC releases its Legislative Priorities, which are based on several core policy priority areas. This end of session summary is organized with the [2018 GBC Legislative Priorities](#) in mind. The report is divided into several policy areas deemed important by the Greater Baltimore business community regarding business competitiveness and job creation.



### GBC Legislative Priority: Creating a More Competitive Business Climate

The creation of a strong and competitive business climate is among the most important roles of government leaders and policymakers. It is paramount that Maryland's leaders make a competitive business climate part of a comprehensive policy approach. During the 2018 session, the Maryland General Assembly considered numerous economic development incentive-related bills that help make the Greater Baltimore region and the State more competitive, as well as tort-related bills, increased minimum wage and hiring-related bills.



#### [Senate Bill 989](#) -- One Maryland Economic Development Tax Credits - Simplification and Alteration (Passed)

This bill sought to make a number of important improvements to the existing One Maryland Tax Credit, but the GBC was most interested in the alteration to the definition of a "qualified distressed county" (QDC). Without the passage of this change in the legislation Baltimore City was going to lose its QDC designation, and could no longer utilize the One Maryland program to provide incentives for businesses that invest and create jobs in a project located in a QDC. Baltimore City, with the passage of this legislation, retains its eligibility for these valuable incentives.

#### [Senate Bill 877](#) -- Promoting extraordinary Innovation in Maryland's Economy (PRIME Act) (Passed)

The legislature passed a bill that creates a significant incentive package to attract Amazon's second headquarters location to Montgomery County. The bill creates tax credits and incentives specifically designed for Amazon that will only be used should Montgomery County win the project. Specifically, this bill establishes tax incentives for a Fortune 100 company that establishes an eligible project in the State that, over a 17-year period, hires 40,000 qualified positions and has \$4.5 billion in specified project expenditures. The qualifying

business may claim an income tax credit based on the number of jobs created, a tax credit against the State and local property tax imposed on real property and a sales and use tax exemption for some purchases.

### **Economic Development Incentives Legislation**

Several economic development incentive-related bills that sought to alter existing programs passed the Senate, but gained no traction in the House. These included legislation to alter programs including Maryland Economic Development Authority and Fund, Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE), Enterprise Zones and More Jobs for Marylanders. The actual bills were:

- [Senate Bill 67](#) -- Department of Commerce - Maryland Economic Development Assistance Authority and Fund - Renaming and Revising (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 810](#) -- Job Reinvestment Act of 2018 (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 966](#) -- RISE Zones - Expansion and Income Tax Credit (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 305/House Bill 363](#) -- More Jobs for Marylanders 2.0 (Failed)

### [House Bill 512](#) -- Labor and Employment - Wage History Information (Failed)

The GBC opposed legislation that would have created new and unnecessary requirements on Maryland's employers. The bill would have prohibited an employer with at least 15 employees from screening an applicant for employment based on the applicant's wage history and from seeking wage history information.

### [Senate Bill 543/House Bill 664](#) -- Labor and Employment - Payment of the Minimum Wage Required (Fight for Fifteen) (Failed)

Senate Bill 543 would have incrementally increased the statewide minimum wage to \$15 per hour by July 1, 2023 and provided that every July 1, thereafter, the minimum wage would increase by the average percent growth in the Consumer Price Index. The GBC supported this legislation, but only if significant amendments were made to the bill, including: (1) prohibit a county or municipality from enacting any law regulating the hourly minimum wage that is inconsistent with the State's minimum wage established through this legislation; (2) extend the time period for small and mid-size employers to reach the higher minimum wage level; (3) address the bill's removal of provisions impacting seasonal, temporary, and youth workers; and (4) eliminate the change to the tipped wage category to bring all tipped wage workers to the Maryland minimum wage by July 1, 2026. The bill gained little momentum during the 2018 session, but the GBC expects the legislation to be introduced again in the 2019 session.

### **Tort Climate Legislation**

The GBC opposed three bills during the 2018 session that sought to alter the tort landscape in the State of Maryland. All three bills failed. A positive tort climate is a competitive advantage that the State has over its neighbors, and it is important that it is retained. These issues affect the cost of doing business in Maryland and further create a positive



perception of the business climate. Specifically, these bills sought to: (1) increase the maximum amount of noneconomic damages that may be recovered in wrongful death or survival actions; (2) stipulate that in an action to recover damages arising from the negligent operation of a motor vehicle, recovery by the plaintiff may not be barred due to the plaintiff's negligence; and (3) alter established case law that punitive damages may be awarded in a civil action only if the plaintiff proves by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant acted with wantonness, fraud or malice.

- [Senate Bill 36](#) -- Civil Actions -- Noneconomic Damages (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 465](#) -- Civil Actions - Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Pedestrians or Nonmotorized Vehicles - Comparative Negligence (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 5](#) -- Civil Actions - Punitive Damage Awards (Failed)

### **GBC Legislative Priority: Building and Strengthening the Workforce**

A number of bills that will improve the skills and preparation of the workforce were addressed during the 2018 session. Topics ranged from computer science education, financial literacy curriculum, tax credits for providing internships, apprenticeship bills, and education reform bills. The GBC supported all of the following bills.

#### **[House Bill 1415](#) -- Education - Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Passed)**

House Bill 1415 extends the deadline for the commission to complete its work and improves and mandates funding for programs in teacher recruitment and outreach, early literacy, extended school day or school year programs for low-income schools, career and technology education, and scholarships for aspiring teachers.

#### **[House Bill 281](#) -- Education - Computer Science - Curriculum and Professional Development (Securing the Future: Computer Science Education for All) (Passed)**

HB 281 requires all Maryland school districts to offer at least one computer science class. It also establishes the Maryland Center for Computing Education, which will develop a computer science education implementation plan as well as professional development programs for educators. Finally, the bill creates a grant program to support professional development in computer science education.

#### **[Senate Bill 236](#) -- State Board of Education - Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Curriculum - Development and Implementation (Failed)**

Senate Bill 236 would have required the State Board of Education to develop curriculum content for a semester-long high school elective course in financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Local Boards would be given the option to implement the curriculum.

#### **[Senate Bill 380/House Bill 1358](#) -- Income Tax Credit - Employers - Eligible Internships Support (Failed)**

Senate Bill 380/HB 1358 would have created a tax credit against the State income tax for a business entity located in the State that employs an eligible intern that would not have been hired without the tax credit. The credit would be equal to

the lesser of 10 percent of the wages paid to each eligible intern or \$1,000.

**[Senate Bill 612/House Bill 693](#) -- State Education Aid - Tax Increment Financing Development Districts - Repeal of Sunset Provision (Both Passed)**

Senate Bill 612/House Bill 693 repeal the termination date on the mandatory tax increment financing (TIF) district grants to local school systems. As a result, State aid to Baltimore City Public Schools increases by \$684,600 in FY 2020, and by \$1.4 million by FY 2023 and potentially more in future years.

**[House Bill 1234](#) -- Career Youth and Public Sector Apprenticeship Act (Passed)**

House Bill 1234 authorizes county boards of education to award credit for registered apprenticeships, and requires the State to develop apprenticeships to address workforce shortage areas in State government.

**[Senate Bill 978/House Bill 1216](#) -- Career Preparation Expansion Act (Both Passed)**

These bills authorize the State Board to adopt regulations to require local school systems to award credit for time spent in registered apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeship participation will be shared with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System.

**GBC Legislative Priority:  
Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

As Maryland competes to be a leader in emerging technologies and grow a strong entrepreneurial community, policies and programs need to reflect these priorities. The 2018 session saw a myriad of innovation-related legislation, but most bills did not pass. However, the State's existing cybersecurity incentive did see significant changes that seek to improve the efficacy of the tax credit.

**[Senate Bill 228](#) -- Cybersecurity Incentive Tax Credits (Passed)**

The legislature passed a bill supported by the GBC that makes a number of important changes to the existing Cybersecurity Investment Incentive Tax Credit. These changes will improve the program, make the incentive more useful and grow the valuable cybersecurity industry in the Greater Baltimore region. Specifically, this bill extends through fiscal year 2023 the termination date of the cybersecurity investment incentive tax credit and requires at least a \$3 million budget allowance each fiscal year. The most significant change alters the program by specifying that the investor who makes the qualifying investment in a Maryland cybersecurity company claims the tax credit instead of the cybersecurity company. The bill also creates a tax credit against the State income tax for a qualified buyer who purchases cybersecurity technology or service from a Maryland company.

**[Senate Bill 1151](#) -- Income Tax - Biotechnology Investment Incentive Tax Credit - Alteration (Failed)**

This bill would have altered the Biotechnology Investment Incentive Tax Credit by prohibiting a single biotechnology company from receiving more than \$7 million in aggregate funding for all fiscal years. The bill would have also eliminated the time period limitation that prohibits a qualified Maryland biotechnology company from being eligible for the tax credit if

the company has been in active business for a specified number of years. The GBC maintains it is not prudent to eliminate the active business cap and that this issue requires further study and collaboration with the bioscience industry.

#### **[Senate Bill 955/House Bill 526](#) -- Angel Investor Tax Credit Program (Failed)**

Currently, there are no incentives that seek to support a broad range of industries in the tech-led economic development space. This bill would have created a tax credit against the State income tax for investors that make qualified investments in Maryland innovation businesses. The GBC initially promoted this program in Maryland, which led to legislation during the 2015 and 2016 sessions. This concept reemerged this session, but was ultimately unsuccessful. The GBC contends this program can be an important tool for the innovation-led economy that is constantly changing and presenting new opportunities. The GBC expects this bill to be introduced in some form again in 2019.

#### **[House Bill 1450](#) -- Income Tax - Research and Development Tax Credit - Alterations (Failed)**

The GBC consistently supports legislation that seeks to increase the availability of funds for the Maryland Research and Development Tax Credit (R&D Tax Credit). The R&D Tax Credit has proved to be an effective economic development tool, supports innovation-related employment and keeps Maryland competitive. This bill would have expanded the R&D Tax Credit by increasing from \$12 million to \$14 million the aggregate amount of credits. The bill would have also set aside 25 percent of the maximum amount of the tax credits authorized for small businesses.

#### **[House Bill 1654](#) -- Commercial Law - Internet Privacy and Net Neutrality (Failed)**

Net neutrality is a contentious issue and plays a role in tech-led economic development. However, the GBC opposed this bill contending that net neutrality is more appropriately in the purview of the federal government and any policy should be decided by Congress. This bill would have established requirements related to Internet privacy in the State and prohibited the use of State funds to procure services from an Internet service provider that blocks content, impairs or degrades lawful Internet traffic, or engages in commercial traffic preferencing.

### **GBC Legislative Priority: Ensuring Public Safety to Grow Jobs and Promote a Higher Quality of Life**

On the heels of several violent years in Baltimore City, the GBC was keenly focused on public safety issues during this year's session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Over the past several months, the GBC has consistently urged state and local officials to pursue a two-pronged approach to Baltimore City's crime problem. Under this approach, leaders should focus equally on fighting the criminal activity taking place today as well as tackling the root causes of crime, such as poverty, a lack of opportunity, dysfunctional schools and institutional racism.

Throughout the session, the GBC advocated for legislation that was consistent with the two-pronged approach paying

particular attention to proposals regarding repeat violent offenders. These individuals are historically known for causing much of the violence in Baltimore. Data released by the Baltimore Police Department substantiates that premise noting that 85 percent of the individuals identified as suspects in homicides had been arrested previously.

The GBC supported a package of crime bills introduced by Governor Larry Hogan aimed at increasing penalties for firearms offenses, strengthening the state's gang statute, and truth in sentencing for repeat offenders. While none of these bills passed in their entirety, some aspects of the bills were enacted through other legislation. These bills focused on increasing penalties for firearms crimes. House Bill 1029 ultimately passed with amendments.

- [Senate Bill 197/House Bill 101](#) -- Crimes- Firearms - Penalties (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 198/House Bill 102](#) -- Criminal Gang Offenses - Penalties, Procedure and Elements (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 199/House Bill 100](#) -- Criminal Law - Violent Offenders - Penalties (Accountability for Violent Criminals Act of 2018) (Failed)
- [Senate Bill 1062/House Bill 991](#) -- Weapon Crimes - Detachable Magazines and Regulated Firearms - Possession (Failed)
- [House Bill 1029](#) -- Criminal Law - Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Loaded Handgun - Subsequent Offender (Passed)

Other public safety legislation included:

[Senate Bill 126](#) -- Criminal Procedure - Right of Appeal - Unlawful Possession of Firearm (Failed)

Senate Bill 126 was aimed at the state's right to appeal a judge's decision precluding the introduction of evidence at a trial involving firearms violations.

[House Bill 432](#) -- Public Safety - Grant Programs and Funding (Public Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2018) (Passed)

House Bill 432 was originally proposed to create a grant fund for local governments to be used on evidence-based public health approaches to gun violence. The final version of the bill also included critical funding for other Baltimore City programs, such as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program and the Outward Bound School in Baltimore.

[House Bill 113](#) -- Public Safety - Baltimore City Safe Streets Initiatives - Funding (The Tyrone Ray Safe Streets Act) (Passed)

This bill provides additional funding for the Safe Streets program and was supported by the GBC.

[Senate Bill 669/House Bill 827](#) -- Juvenile Law - Juvenile Diversion Program (Failed)

Senate Bill 669/House Bill 827, bills supported by the GBC, would have created a diversion program for juveniles.

[Senate Bill 101](#) -- Criminal Law - Crimes of Violence, Expungement, and Drug Treatment (Passed)

Senate Bill 101 reduced wait times for expungement of nonviolent offenses.



In addition, the GBC also supported several bills aimed at helping individuals who are incarcerated or returning from incarceration. These bills were either withdrawn or failed to get out of committee. They include:

**[Senate Bill 1113/House Bill 295](#) -- **Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education (Failed)****

Senate Bill 1113/House Bill 295 would have allowed inmates to receive diminution credits for completing educational or workforce programs.

**[House Bill 541](#)-- **Labor and Employment - Criminal Record Screening Practices (Ban the Box) (Failed)****

This bill would have applied the ban the box question regarding past criminal history to more employers across the state.

**[House Bill 476](#) -- **Income Tax Credit - Employment of Diversion Program Participants (Second Chance Act) (Failed)****

House Bill 476 would have encouraged employers to hire individuals who have participated in a diversion program.

**GBC Legislative Priority:  
Building a Competitive, Predictable and Fair Tax System**

A fair and predictable tax structure is a key factor that determines business location and expansion, yet Maryland's tax structure remains uncompetitive in some areas. The 2018 session saw important positive changes to Maryland's tax structure with the passage of single sales factor apportionment legislation and an attempt to reduce the unexpected tax burden precipitated by federal tax law changes. The session also brought with it attempts to make Maryland's tax structure less competitive for businesses, but those efforts were unsuccessful.

**[Senate Bill 1090/House Bill 1794](#) -- **Corporate Income Tax - Single Sales Factor Apportionment (Passed)****

The 2018 session ushered in an important change to Maryland's tax structure with the passage of single sales factor apportionment legislation strongly supported by the GBC. These bills alter the formula used to apportion income to the State for the corporate income tax. The single sales factor apportionment method is a business development incentive that seeks to attract businesses into a state by eliminating the tax costs of physical relocation.

**Combined Reporting and "Throwback Rule"**

The GBC opposed attempts to make Maryland's tax structure less competitive for businesses, and those bills were all defeated. Several bills sought to require affiliated corporations to compute Maryland taxable income using combined reporting. Other legislation would have applied a "throwback rule" in determining whether sales are considered in the State for purposes of the State's corporate income tax apportionment formula. These bills gained little traction during the 2018 session, but represent a threat to the perception of Maryland's business climate through their mere discussion. The bills included:

- [Senate Bill 195/House Bill 566](#) -- **Business Relief and Tax Fairness Act of 2018 (Failed)**
- [Senate Bill 227/House Bill 842](#) -- **Small Business Fairness Act of 2018 (Failed)**
- [Senate Bill 538/House Bill 1051](#) -- **Corporate Income Tax - Throwback Rule (Failed)**

## **GBC Legislative Priority: Advocating Growth-Oriented Transportation Policies**

The GBC was active on a number of transportation issues during the session. Positions were taken in support of bills that would strengthen the Baltimore region's transportation infrastructure and encourage job growth, while bills that would stymie progress or make things more difficult to business were opposed.

### **[House Bill 180](#) -- Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew (Passed)**

House Bill 180 passed despite the GBC's opposition. The bill prohibits a train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight that shares the same rail corridor as passenger trains from being operated in the State unless it has at least two crew members. This makes Maryland one of three states in the country and the only state in the mid-Atlantic region to legislatively mandate the size of crew members on freight rail lines.

### **[Senate Bill 277/House Bill 372](#) -- Maryland Metro/Transit Funding Act (Passed)**

These bills not only provided necessary funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system, but also increase operating and capital funding for the Mass Transit Administration (MTA) for Baltimore's system for fiscal years 2020 through 2022. In addition, the amended bill creates the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan Commission, which would work with MTA to prepare a 25-year plan to meet the mass transit needs of the Baltimore region. Three representatives from business organizations will participate as members of the commission, one appointed by the Speaker of the House, one by the President of the Senate, and one by the Governor.

### **[House Bill 1468](#) -- Transit - Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (Passed)**

This bill establishes the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) in MTA to provide grants to projects that provide transportation services to targeted populations working in specified employment areas.

### **[Senate Bill 516/House Bill 807](#) -- Transportation - Highway User Revenues - Distribution (Passed)**

House Bill 807 alters the distribution of funds in the Gasoline and Motor Vehicle Revenue Account of the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) to provide capital transportation grants to Baltimore City, counties and municipalities. For fiscal years 2020 through 2024, Baltimore City will receive 8.3 percent of the funds allocated to the TTF, counties will receive 3.2 percent and municipalities will receive 2 percent. After fiscal year 2024, the payments will revert back to current levels. As House Bill 807 represents only a five year fix for this problem, the GBC urges that a more permanent solution be achieved prior to fiscal year 2025.

### **[House Bill 957](#) -- Motor Fuel Tax Rates - CPI Adjustment (Failed)**

The GBC opposed a proposal to repeal the requirement that the motor fuel tax rate be annually adjusted based on inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Such an action would have eliminated important strides made to provide adequate funding for Maryland's TTF.

### **Maglev-related bills**

A number of bills were introduced in an attempt to make it difficult or impossible to construct a high speed rail line in Maryland, such as the proposed Maglev line from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore. With GBC opposition, all of these bills failed, with the exception of one bill that was amended to limit its scope to ensure an environmental analysis for proposed projects. These bills included:

- **[House Bill 548](#) -- Privately Owned Transportation Projects - Construction and Authorization to Use State-Owned Rights-of-Way and Property - Requirements (Passed)**
- **[Senate Bill 1073](#) -- Railroad Companies - Condemnation Authority - Application (Failed)**
- **[Senate Bill 1004](#)/**[House Bill 637](#) -- Counties - Asset Transfer for High-Speed Transportation System - Hearing and Approval Requirements (Both Failed)****
- **[Senate Bill 1005](#)/**[House Bill 638](#) -- Counties and Municipalities - Asset Transfer for High-Speed Transportation System - Agreements (Both Failed)****
- **[Senate Bill 1003](#) -- Magnetic Levitation Transportation System - Limitations (Failed)**
- **[Senate Bill 1149](#) -- Appropriations and Public-Private Partnerships - Transit Lines - Three-Station Requirement (Failed)**

### **GBC Legislative Priority: Promoting Tourism as an Economic Development Driver**

The Greater Baltimore Committee has been a long-time supporter and promoter of the regional hospitality and tourism industry, which is a well-established driver of jobs, revenue and investment. Strategic and effective investments in tourism are proven to yield results in business growth. During the 2018 session, the GBC supported successful bills that seek to ensure that the region's tourism industry remains an important part of the region's economy.

### **[Senate Bill 400](#) -- Baltimore Convention Facility - Operating Deficits and Capital Improvement Reserve Fund (Passed)**

One vital component of the state and region's tourism economy is the convention industry. The Baltimore Convention Center (BCC), the state's convention center, attracts tourists to trade shows, conventions, and meetings that provide significant revenue for restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues and other service providers. Last year, the BCC hosted 50 conventions and events accounting for more than 300,000 attendees and approximately \$150 million in economic impact. Currently, the Maryland Stadium Authority must contribute two-thirds to the annual operating deficit of the BCC and Baltimore City must contribute one-third. Senate Bill

400 extends this agreement by 10 years, to December 31, 2029.

### **House Bill 1385 -- Baltimore City - Tourism Improvement District (Passed)**

Despite all of Baltimore's attributes, the city and its tourism industry lacks the funding for persistent and effective marketing. One way to increase funding for tourism and marketing is to create a tourism improvement district (TID), which is a public-private partnership between a jurisdiction and local businesses to provide supplemental funding for marketing activities. House Bill 1385 authorizes Baltimore City to establish a TID, allows a special assessment on businesses in the TID, and designates an existing private nonprofit destination marketing organization, Visit Baltimore, to administer the district's programs and activities.

## **Upcoming Dates of Interest**

Join the GBC and Associated Black Charities on [April 26](#) for a Maryland Gubernatorial Forum featuring seven Democratic candidates for Governor of Maryland: Rushern Baker, Benjamin Jealous, Kevin Kamenetz, Richard Madaleno, Alec Ross, Jim Shea and Krish Vignarajah. This event will begin at 5:30 p.m. at University of Maryland School of Medicine, Leadership Hall, 685 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

Join the GBC on [May 14](#) for its 63rd Annual Meeting, the state's premier business event of the year. To become a sponsor or to purchase tickets, please contact Lisa Byrd, Director of Events and Business Development, at 410-727-2820.

On [May 23](#), the GBC is hosting a Newsmaker Breakfast featuring a conversation with Annie Milli, Executive Director of Live Baltimore, about Baltimore's housing options and neighborhood strengths and hidden gems. This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC Office, 111 S. Calvert St., Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.