



GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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



February 15, 2019

State House Update

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GBC'S 2019 AGENDA

[GBC's 2019 Legislative Agenda](#)

GBC'S LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

To read testimony and get more information about bills the GBC tracked this year, visit our [legislative tracking website](#).

MD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[General Assembly Website](#)

[Committee Schedule](#)

Message to Members

The Maryland General Assembly's bill introduction deadlines have passed. Any bills introduced after the bill introduction dates go to the respective chamber's Rules Committee. To be viable, a bill must get out of the Rules Committee and be assigned to the appropriate standing policy committee.

As of February 14, there are 928 Senate bills, one Senate resolution, 1,310 House bills and eight House resolutions, for a total of 2,247 bills. There will be more bills introduced, but the bulk of the legislation is now accounted for at this point in the session.

The quantity of legislation introduced varies from session to session. There are often fewer bills introduced during the first year of a four-year term, so this year's lower workload makes sense. Freshman legislators are still learning the legislative process and controversial legislation is often introduced in years two or three of a four-year term.

Four years ago, the first session of the previous term, there were 2,832 bills introduced. The 2019 haul of 2,247 so far will likely fall well short of the 2015 number. This year's total is also substantially lower than the 2018 session, the fourth of a

GBC EVENTS**February 20, 2019**

NewsMaker Breakfast:
Baltimore's CitiWatch
Surveillance Camera Program -
Its Role in Law Enforcement

February 25, 2019

NewsMaker Breakfast: Meet
Baltimore Police Department
Acting Commissioner
Michael Harrison

April 15, 2019

Breakfast Briefing:
What the Affordable Care Act
Means for You

May 13, 2019

GBC Annual Meeting

July 10, 2019

GBC Golf Classic

Speaker Series with
Chris McDonell,
President and CEO,
McDonell Consulting
Group/Sandler Training:

May 8, 2019

LinkedIn and the Art of Social
Selling

September 26, 2019

Closing the Sale: How to Inspect
What you Expect

November 20, 2019

Effective Networking and
Business Development

Event and sponsorship
information:

Lisa Byrd at 410-727-2820

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four-year term, which saw 3,127 bills. That figure represents the most bills introduced in many years.

The quantity of bills introduced means little, however, in the long run. While more bills requires additional hearings and longer days for legislators, what counts is what policymakers do with their time. The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) will continue to be a constant presence in Annapolis advocating for a stronger climate for business competitiveness.

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

Sincerely,



Donald C. Fry
President and CEO

Proposal to Raise Minimum Wage in Maryland Supported with Conditions by the GBC

It could be argued that one of the most newsworthy issues in the 2019 session is the proposal to incrementally increase the statewide minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The GBC expressed its support of the proposals ([SB 280/HB 166](#)) pending in the Maryland General Assembly to raise the state minimum wage to \$15-per-hour contingent on the inclusion of several key amendments.

It is important to note that the GBC has always maintained that any effort to change the minimum wage should be done on the federal or state level, not the county or city level. With action on the issue at the federal level unlikely due to political polarization, the GBC understands that advocates for a higher minimum wage are pressing for new action at the State level, though Maryland's current minimum wage of \$10.10 per hour is higher than that required by federal law and in effect in neighboring states.

The amendments that the GBC is seeking include preventing individual jurisdictions in Maryland from raising the minimum wage beyond that set by the state legislature and allowing small and mid-size employers a longer period of time to meet the new minimum wage requirement. Specifically, the GBC's support of the proposed legislation is contingent on passage of the following amendments:

- Establish separate timetables for small, mid-size and large employers to meet the new state minimum wage.
- Prohibit counties and municipalities in Maryland from enacting legislation on minimum wage that is inconsistent with state law.
- Eliminate a provision that requires all tipped-wage workers to be paid the state minimum wage by July 1, 2026.



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- Strike a proposal that requires employers to pay seasonal, temporary and youth workers (under age 20) at the state minimum wage level.
- Preserve a provision that exists in current law that prohibits an employee from making groundless or malicious complaints against an employer and maintains the penalties for such violations.

The hearing for the House version of the legislation took place on February 8. The Senate bill is scheduled for a hearing on February 21. [See the full GBC testimony submitted on HB 166.](#)

GBC Testimony in Annapolis

This week, the GBC took positions on eight bills in the Maryland General Assembly's 2019 session:

Supported

SB 175 -- Maryland Research and Development Tax Credit - Sunset Extension

Establishes the Maryland Technology Infrastructure Program, Authority and Fund (MTIF) in the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), whose purpose is to: (1) facilitate strategic planning and guidance by convening leaders from industry and anchor research institutions, as well as other key innovation stakeholders; (2) identify policies and investments needed to advance Maryland's innovation around targeted growth opportunities and place-making efforts; (3) manage MTIF for investments in projects; and (4) coordinate economic development service delivery to ensure high-quality customer service.

HB 117 -- Maryland Smart Growth Investment Fund (cross filed with SB 3)

Requires the Maryland Department of Commerce to issue a request for proposals for a management entity to establish the Maryland Smart Growth Investment Fund and requires that the Governor allocate funding for the program.

HB 229 -- State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy - Annual Report - Crimes of Violence (cross filed with SB 176)

Requires that additional information about sentencing be included in the annual report submitted by the State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy.

HB 294 -- Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education

Authorizes a one-time diminution credit to reduce the term of confinement of an inmate who successfully obtains a certificate of completion for a technical or vocational training program, a State High School Diploma by Examination, a high school diploma, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.

HB 375 -- Corporate Income Tax - Rate Reduction

Lowers the State corporate income tax rate from 8.25 percent to 6.25 percent by decreasing the rate .50 percent in tax years 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

HB 516 -- Office of Legislative Audits - Audits of the Baltimore Police Department

Requires the Office of Legislative Audits to conduct an audit of the Baltimore Police Department every six years focused specifically on financial management practices, including its effectiveness and efficiency.

Opposed

SB 252 -- Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew (cross filed with HB 66)

Prohibit a train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight from being operated in Maryland unless it has at least two crew members.

HB 209 -- Privately Owned Transportation Projects - Construction and Authorization to Use State-Owned Rights-of-Way and Property - Requirements

Would require an environmental impact statement be prepared, even if not required under federal law, for a project that includes the construction of one or more tunnels with a diameter of six feet or greater that will be used by a common carrier.

For an up-to-date account of the GBC's efforts in Annapolis during the session, visit our [legislative tracking page](#). The legislative tracking page contains the GBC's positions on priority legislation, including testimony.

Commentaries by GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry

[Click here](#) to listen to Don Fry's commentary, *Legislative Proposals Fight Violent Crime*, on WBAL News Radio 1090, posted on February 7, 2019.

[Click here](#) to read Don Fry's commentary, *Proposal to Raise Minimum Wage in Maryland Supported with Conditions by the Greater Baltimore Committee*, published on February 8, 2019.

Upcoming Dates of Interest

On [February 20](#), the GBC is hosting a Newsmaker Breakfast, "Baltimore's CitiWatch Surveillance Camera Program - Its Role in Law Enforcement." This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC Office, 111 South Calvert Street, Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.

On [February 25](#), the GBC is hosting a Newsmaker Breakfast, "Meet Baltimore Police Department Acting Commissioner Michael Harrison." This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the

GBC Office, 111 South Calvert Street, Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.

On [April 15](#), the GBC is hosting a Breakfast Briefing, "What the Affordable Care Act Means for You." This event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the GBC Office, 111 South Calvert Street, Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202.