Strengthening Maryland’s Competitive Edge

2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Strengthening Maryland’s Competitive Edge

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Regional business leaders creating a better tomorrow...today.
POSITIONING MARYLAND TO COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of more than 500 members, including businesses, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and foundations. Most members are located in the Greater Baltimore region, which consists of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties, and Baltimore City.

The GBC’s mission is to improve the business climate of Greater Baltimore by organizing its corporate and civic leadership to develop solutions to the problems that affect the region’s competitiveness and viability. In short, the GBC focuses on economic growth and job creation.

Our organization has a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to challenges. As a private-sector thought leader that collaborates with elected officials, top business CEOs, and nonprofit leaders, the GBC has the experience and expertise to advocate for policies that provide a competitive edge for Maryland. While the GBC is a regional organization, when it comes to policy and advocacy, our impact is statewide.

The 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly will address a number of issues that will influence State policy for years to come. The 90-day session will likely be dominated by education reform and school construction. The GBC will be actively engaged in these and other major issues, including legislation to keep the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico, ensuring effective business incentives are maintained, advocating for transportation priorities, and seeking solutions to public safety concerns in the Greater Baltimore region.

The GBC will focus its efforts on the following top priorities:

- Advocating for inclusive policies and programs that strengthen economic competitiveness and job creation.
- Improving public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies and implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies.
- Strengthening education and workforce systems to prioritize equity, accountability, and alignment with Maryland’s high-growth industry sectors.
- Advocating for a balanced transportation policy and funding priorities that create interconnected, multimodal transportation networks and promote equitable investment in systems across regions, modes, and communities.

The GBC looks forward to working with policymakers to advance these priorities. By working together to leverage our assets, advance inclusionary policies, and enhance opportunities, I am confident that Maryland will be recognized as a leader in the global economy.

Donald C. Fry
GBC President and CEO

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Core Pillars for a Competitive Business Environment and Job Creation

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner

Workforce that is highly educated and meets Maryland’s business needs

Regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable, and predictable

Tax structure that is fair and competitive

Competitive costs of doing business

Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms

Strategic and effective state investments in business growth

Business marketing strategy that is aggressive, coordinated, long-term, and well-funded

SOURCE: GBC Report, Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland
Advocate for inclusive policies and programs that strengthen economic competitiveness and job creation.

The creation of a strong and competitive business climate is among the most important roles of government. It is critical that government leadership unites with business as a partner. Job creation, a key outcome of a strong business climate, not only provides additional tax revenue, but new opportunities for citizens at all levels of the employment ladder. It is paramount that Maryland’s elected leaders make a competitive business climate part of a comprehensive policy approach.

- Support policies that ensure that the cost of doing business in Maryland is competitive with other states, including regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable, and predictable.
- Support a strong economic development infrastructure that improves the business climate, creates jobs, and cultivates entrepreneurship.

- Oppose the passage of destabilizing business taxation proposals that would create uncertainty, negatively affect the corporate tax structure, or diminish the economic vitality of our State.
- Maintain state investment in Maryland’s most innovative industries, including bioscience, cybersecurity, healthcare information technology, education technology, medical devices, and other cutting-edge industry sectors.
- Create an angel investor incentive or similar program to provide capital for innovative startup companies.
- Expand initiatives that stimulate commercialization and technology transfer from Maryland’s research universities.
Improve public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies and implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies.

Violent crime and public safety concerns threaten the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of our communities. Persistent violent crime rates in Baltimore City require strategic action by state and city officials. Policymakers must join together in a coordinated approach that reduces violent crime while simultaneously addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty, joblessness and a lack of education or workforce training.

- Increase efforts to implement programs that address trauma, addiction, and mental health, and provide access to rehabilitative treatment, education, and workforce training.

- Strengthen laws and coordination of criminal justice agencies to prioritize focus on repeat violent offenders.

- Improve public accessibility of judicial data to increase transparency.

- Implement a comprehensive reform of Maryland’s juvenile justice system based on systemic analyses and best practices to ensure better outcomes for youth.

- Strengthen expungement provisions to increase opportunities for employment.

- Expand provisions to limit liability and provide incentives for employers who hire “justice-involved” individuals.
Strengthen education and workforce systems to prioritize equity, accountability, and alignment with Maryland’s high-growth industry sectors.

Preparing the workforce to be successful in tomorrow’s economy requires innovative thinking, industry-specific training programs and career pathways. Policymakers should enact legislation that ensures the state’s workforce has well-trained workers at all skill levels.

- Ensure that school funding is adequate and targeted to prepare all students to achieve academic proficiency standards and succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce.

- Advocate for enhanced support for Career and Technology Education (CTE), dual enrollment, and work-based learning programs in high schools.

- Prioritize funding for early childhood education programs and high-quality, affordable child care.

- Support policies and programs to increase employer-based apprenticeships and internships.

- Advocate for increased funding for key workforce programs including Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN), registered apprenticeships for youth and adults, and Workforce Sequence Scholarships.

- Support dedicated State funding for wraparound services for students in K-12 education, community colleges, and workforce training programs.

- Support modifications to child support enforcement and driver’s license suspension policies for low-income residents to lessen barriers to workforce participation.

- Support evidence-based policies and programs to promote successful re-entry from incarceration and remove barriers to employment, including restrictions on access to education and training grants and scholarships, professional and occupational licenses, and housing.
Advocate for a balanced transportation policy and funding priorities that create interconnected, multimodal transportation networks and promote equitable investment in systems across regions, modes, and communities.

Policymakers should strategically invest in interconnected multimodal transportation networks that actively contribute to economic growth, connect workers to employment, and move people and goods safely and efficiently. Transportation investments should be allocated equitably across geographic regions and modes.

- Advocate for consistent and adequate capital and operating funding levels for the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to ensure the safe and efficient operations of the current system and to reduce the multibillion dollar backlog needed to maintain the existing system in a state of good repair.

- Prioritize funding for projects that provide enhanced multimodal connectivity to major workforce and distribution centers including the Port of Baltimore, BWI Airport, Tradepoint Atlantic, and Port Covington.

- Support policies, funding, and incentives to enhance and promote inclusive transit-oriented development.

- Advocate for policy and funding to advance key MARC projects and expand service hours and frequency to enhance workforce connectivity to key employment centers.

- Support a formal study of MTA’s current governance and funding structures to identify opportunities for reform and to examine the feasibility of implementing a regional authority model.

- Support modifications to the transportation-project scoring law to provide additional points to regional projects that enjoy support from multiple local jurisdictions and to require that P3 projects be considered in a separate category than traditionally funded projects.
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