



2022

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

*Strengthening Maryland's
Competitive Edge*



GREATER
BALTIMORE
COMMITTEE



POSITIONING MARYLAND TO COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

In the last year of a four-year term with a multitude of major issues pending in the General Assembly, the Greater Baltimore Committee determined it would be prudent to focus on issues that prioritize the creation of a competitive business environment and job creation.

This is especially important as Maryland businesses continue to struggle with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland, a report published by the GBC, identified eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth.

Our legislative strategy for this legislative session is to maintain our focus on issues that are consistent with the pillars for economic growth and job creation.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP THAT UNITES WITH BUSINESS AS A PARTNER

Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

The GBC will continue to partner with the state and local governments to ensure that the Baltimore region and Maryland understand and respect the private sector and its needs, including issues related to public safety, transportation, and education and their impact on business operations and competitiveness.

- ▶ Ensure the business voice is represented on relevant task forces
- ▶ Address violent crime with a focus on repeat violent offenders and programs to address the root causes of criminal activity (poverty, education, job opportunities, etc.)
- ▶ Judicial Transparency



WORKFORCE THAT IS HIGHLY-EDUCATED AND MEETS MARYLAND'S BUSINESS NEEDS.

Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.

The GBC will advocate for the education and training needs outlined in the GBC Preparing for the Future: A Regional Workforce Development Initiative report.

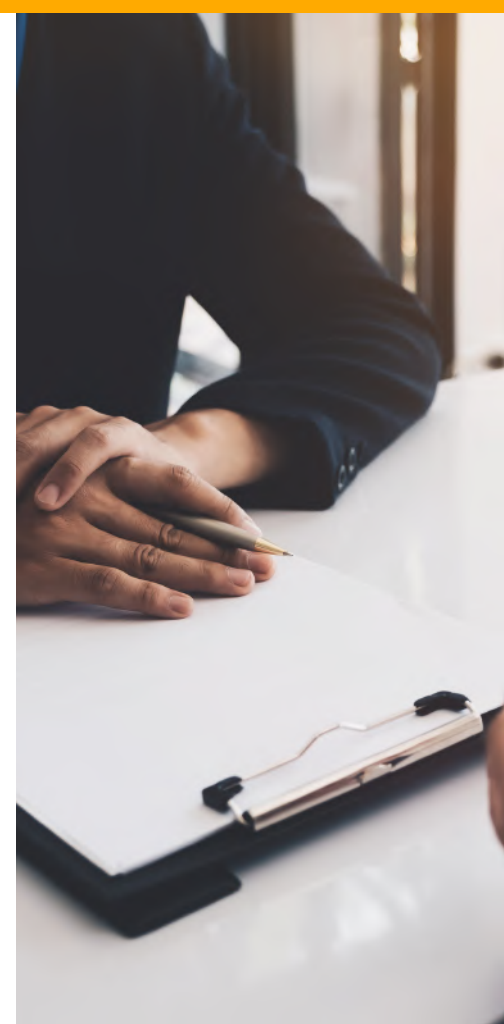
Support funding and policy for education and training programs at all levels:

- ▶ Adequate and targeted K-12 funding to prepare students for the workforce
- ▶ Enhanced CTE and work-based learning opportunities at all ages
- ▶ Additional funding for adult basic education and workforce training
- ▶ Support policies and programs to increase registered youth and adult apprenticeships and internships
- ▶ Additional funding for key workforce programs including Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN), registered apprenticeships for youth and adults, and Workforce Sequence Scholarships

Supporting students and workers of all ages:

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.

- ▶ Dedicated State funding for wraparound support services for students in K-12 education, community colleges, and workforce training programs
- ▶ Increase employer-based apprenticeships or certifications across industry sectors for students who do not wish to attend college, and enhance workforce and career-development programs that create more middle-skill job candidates



Second Chance Hiring:

- ▶ Streamline expungement provisions
- ▶ Promote successful re-entry from incarceration
- ▶ Remove barriers to employment for returning citizens
- ▶ Support modifications to child support enforcement and driver's license suspension

REGULATORY POLICIES THAT ARE STREAMLINED, STABLE, AND PREDICTABLE.

Maryland must project to businesses within and outside the state that its government regulatory policies are reasonable, relevant, free of surprises or redundancy, and considerate of businesses' sense of urgency.

The GBC will recommend and advocate for reasonable and predictable regulatory policies.

- ▶ Regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable, and predictable
- ▶ COVID-19 pandemic regulations must not unnecessarily burden small and minority businesses
- ▶ Eliminate outdated regulatory policies
- ▶ New regulations must not be duplicative of existing regulations

TAX STRUCTURE THAT IS FAIR AND COMPETITIVE.

Maryland's tax policy must be perceived by business as being competitive and devoid of elements that unreasonably target specific businesses or business sectors.

The GBC will oppose unreasonably onerous or targeted tax proposals, advocating for fair, predictable taxation.

- ▶ Ensure continued stability of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Funds while not imposing unreasonable added costs to business.
- ▶ Fair and stable tax structure. Opposition to efforts to enact combined reporting, adoption of the throwback rule, or increased filing fees.

COMPETITIVE COSTS OF DOING BUSINESS.

Public policies must reflect a government predisposition to nurture business growth and to avoid arbitrarily or disproportionately imposing additional overhead upon the business sector.

The GBC will work to ensure that additional and unnecessary costs are not imposed on Maryland's businesses.

- ▶ While recognizing the importance of addressing climate issues, related legislation must not disproportionately impact business
- ▶ The struggling commercial real estate market cannot absorb additional building and renovation expenses, filing fees, etc.
- ▶ New programs must not add excessive costs to Maryland businesses as compared to other jurisdictions



SUPERIOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE WITH RELIABLE FUNDING MECHANISMS.

An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes a well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port, and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods, and services.

The GBC supports adequate and equitable funding for the Baltimore region for all modes of transportation, particularly the MTA transit system and local government transportation needs, including the implementation of the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan.

- ▶ Capital and operating funding decisions must be data-driven and examined through an equity lens
- ▶ Fully fund local transportation by addressing the current Highway Use Revenue (HUR) formulas which drastically reduce local government's ability to pay for transportation needs
- ▶ Provide for additional Design & Engineering funding for regional projects to ensure that the State is prepared to take advantage of competitive federal grants
- ▶ Call for enhanced transparency in the Department of Transportation's expenditure of federal infrastructure spending
- ▶ Support summer study to examine and recommend improvements to the funding and governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration in the Baltimore Region
- ▶ Enhanced multimodal connectivity to major workforce and distribution centers including the Port of Baltimore, BWI Airport, Tradepoint Atlantic, and Port Covington
- ▶ Call for modifications/enhancements to the transportation scoring process to include:
 - ▶ Provide a prioritization within State funding for projects that are regional in scope and enjoy regional support
 - ▶ Prioritize funding for projects that provide enhanced multimodal connectivity to major workforce and distribution centers
 - ▶ Prioritize mass transit projects that address equity issues, particularly improved mass transit options in underserved neighborhoods



STRATEGIC AND EFFECTIVE STATE INVESTMENTS IN BUSINESS GROWTH.

The state must commit to substantive strategic investments, leveraged with capital assets, to nurture business and job growth. Investments should include competitive and effective tax credits, business development incentives, and tactical initiatives to nurture private investment in industry growth.

The GBC will advocate for policies that increase access to capital for small and minority businesses, and those that promote growth in Maryland's innovative industries.

- ▶ Recovery resources must be directed to the most impacted industries, including restaurants, hotels, retail, and tourism
- ▶ Increase access to capital for small and minority- owned businesses including both traditional and non-traditional capital sources (CDFIs, PPP, venture capital, etc.)
- ▶ Address child care challenges through targeted policy or funding innovations
- ▶ Support a strong and inclusive economic development ecosystem that improves the business climate, creates jobs, and cultivates entrepreneurship
- ▶ Maintain state investment in Maryland's most innovative industries through grants and tax credits
- ▶ Create an angel investor incentive or similar program to provide capital for innovative startup companies
- ▶ Bridge the digital divide including expanding broadband access and connectivity for individuals and businesses



**II BUSINESS MARKETING STRATEGY THAT IS
AGGRESSIVE, COORDINATED, LONG-TERM, AND
WELL-FUNDED.**

Success breeds success. Competitive states celebrate their businesses' achievements by investing in comprehensive communication and promotion to internal and national audiences of business strengths and the state's assets as a place to live and work.

The GBC supports a sustained marketing program to highlight the assets of Maryland and the Baltimore region to those both within and outside the state.



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