



# POSITION STATEMENT

## TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

### HOUSE BILL 1579 -- PUBLIC SAFETY - CRIME PLAN AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCILS (MARYLAND STATE CRIME PLAN)

March 10, 2020

**DONALD C. FRY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

#### **Position: Support**

House Bill 1579 establishes the Law Enforcement Coordinating Council. The purpose of the Council is to prevent and reduce crime by coordinating and focusing State resources and ensuring interagency communications and intelligence-sharing. The bill also establishes a Regional Law Enforcement Council for each of the regions established by the Law Enforcement Coordinating Council.

The level of violence in Baltimore City is unacceptable and substantive changes are required to improve public safety and ensure economic vitality and competitiveness. For these reasons, improving public safety has been identified by the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) as the most important issue facing Baltimore City and one that needs to be urgently addressed.

The GBC has recommended a two-pronged approach to reduce violent crime. The first prong addresses crime control through programs in areas of improved policing, better technology, and other enhanced public safety initiatives including better coordination among law enforcement agencies. The second prong - crime prevention - must be instituted simultaneously with crime control efforts. It is critically important to address the root societal causes of crime with programs that address poverty, lack of employment, need for job training programs, and an increase in after-school programs. The GBC equally backs these types of initiatives with the same weight afforded crime control strategies.

House Bill 1579 requires increased coordination of law enforcement agencies, which many advocates, including the GBC, identify as an important step to reduce violent crime. This bill specifically provides support services for communities with the greatest concentrations of crime and establishes law enforcement regions that prioritize where resources are most needed. The bill acknowledges that specific strategies are necessary to share intelligence between law enforcement agencies, develop patrol agreements across jurisdictions, and provide mutual aid to law enforcement agencies. This increased coordination, required by statute, will better ensure coordination becomes part of Maryland's overall public safety strategy.

House Bill 1579 is consistent with a key priority in the GBC's 2020 *Legislative Priorities*, which provides that policymakers should strive to "improve public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies and implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies."

**For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 1579.**

*The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 65-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.*

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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