



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

**SENATE BILL 538 -- COMMUNITY COLLEGE TUITION AND
RESIDENCY WAIVERS – FUNDING**

Sponsor – Senator Guzzone

February 3, 2021

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

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 538, which requires the Governor, beginning with Fiscal Year 2023, to include \$10 million annually in the State budget to distribute to community colleges to fund state-mandated tuition and residency waivers. The funds would be allocated to the community colleges in proportion to the number of enrolled students qualifying for such waivers.

Over the years, the State has adopted a number of mandatory tuition and residency waivers for community colleges, including for foster care youth, military service members and their families, senior citizens, children of public safety employees, and public school teachers. While the GBC agrees that this designation is appropriate for these groups, mandated tuition waivers constitute an annual loss of \$10 million of revenue for the State's community colleges. Waivers drive up costs for all students and thus undermine the critical community college mission of affordability. Tuition waivers also threaten the ability of the colleges to enhance select and unique programs of study impacted due to this loss of revenue.

Senate Bill 538 is consistent with one of the key pillars of economic growth and job creations identified in the GBC report *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*:

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.

Passage of Senate Bill 538 will allow Maryland's community colleges to provide the access to quality instruction for Marylanders that is needed to promote economic growth and job opportunities in our state.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 538.

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 66-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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