



**Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce**

*SB 774—Public Safety—Maryland Entertainment District Security Grant Program*

*February 21, 2024*

*Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 550 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on SB 774— Public Safety—Maryland Entertainment District Security Grant Program.

SB 774 establishes the Maryland Entertainment District Security Grant program to assist community organizations, nonprofit groups and local governments in funding security operations during times of high pedestrian traffic in qualifying entertainment districts. Crime has been an issue in Montgomery County and across the State, impacting retail businesses, restaurants and the residents who patron them. We support SB 774 for the reason we support SB 100—Criminal Law—Organized Retail Theft: it offers another way to help to reduce crime and ensure safety for Maryland’s businesses and the patrons they serve.

For these reasons, we would respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 774. And we thank Senator President Ferguson for his leadership on this important issue.