

EP.109 - Mike Gill FINAL

Narrator: You're listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis, the only podcast focused on the BioHealth Capital Region. Each episode, we'll talk to leaders in the industry to break down the biggest topics happening today in BioHealth.

Rich Bendis: Hi, this is Rich Bendis. I'm your host for BioTalk. And as you know, we try to interview leaders within the BioHealth Capital Region as well as nationally and internationally, and we have a guest today that needs no introduction because almost everybody in the world already knows this gentleman.

Mike Gill: Tiger Woods? Is it Tiger Woods, Rich?

Rich Bendis: Well, no, no, no. Maybe we have Jordan Spieth after he just won this past weekend. And as you can tell, we have somebody that's related to Maryland here, and it's the Secretary of Commerce, Mike Gill. Mike and I go back a way, so this is going to be a very easy conversation for all of you listeners out there because Mike is never at a loss for words to address any topic that we'll bring up during this podcast.

0:01:00 Mike, welcome to BioTalk.

Mike Gill: Rich, thank you. It is absolutely fantastic, on this beautiful afternoon. I hope it's as pretty over in Montgomery County as it is over here in Baltimore today.

Rich Bendis: It's great in Maryland every day regardless where you're at.

Mike Gill: Bullish on Maryland, right?

Rich Bendis: Bullish on Maryland. But there probably are a few people who don't know Secretary Gill. Why don't you do a little brief introduction of sort of your history and pathway to how you evolved into Secretary of Commerce in Maryland?

Mike Gill: Rich, the first thing I'm thinking about is, when I get introduced, there must be something that is out there online in my bio because they like to say, "A business leader with over four decades of experience." And I said to somebody, "I better get out of this job real quickly, or they're going to have to move it to five decades."

Rich Bendis: [Laugh] Well, I think you do have a definitive end to this term, don't you?

Mike Gill: No, Rich, thank you. As I sit here today, I'm in my office in the World Trade Center Pratt Street in Baltimore.

0:02:04 I can look out the window and see where I started in my very first job in 1973 with the IBM company, literally out my window. But I'm very much a local kid. I grew up 20 minutes north of where I'm sitting right now. Great family, three siblings, father was a small businessman, elected official in Baltimore County. Went to an all boys' high school, Christian Brother High School, Calvert Hall. Loved it, great experience. Got a baseball scholarship to Clemson. Once in a while, they'll say, "What was your best pitch?" Anything that got close to home plate. Needless to say, my baseball career at Clemson was very unforgettable. I left Clemson after three years, came back to Baltimore, graduated from Towson University. I'd call myself a double tiger. Was a business major, and then had the good fortune of getting a job with IBM. What a great place. You're 22 years old, you don't know a thing. Back in those days, Rich, blue suits, white shirts, and [0:03:02 Seer?] ties. It all worked for me.

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Rich Bendis: The listeners can't see you, but Mike's got his white starched shirt on today.

Mike Gill: It's the only color I own. But it was great, Rich. I was with IBM eight years, had different responsibilities, was a sales school instructor at one point. And then, left IBM, and within a short period of time after that, I actually founded a company in the cellular telephone industry, right in the very beginning, 1984. Had a partner, the partnership didn't work out. We did find a couple niches, and to move that tape forward quickly, by the year 2000, we had over 1,200 team members, and we had a couple niches, both in technical services and in handset repair. And a really big company acquired my company. A Fortune 500, 75,000 employees, \$8 billion in revenue. I stayed a couple of years, and then went on to the next chapter of my life. Because like you, Rich, our lives are chapters. Some have better endings than others, but then you go to the next one.

0:04:06 Joined up with a good friend, Rick Kohr, who I met in the late 80s. Rick had founded an investment bank advisory services firm in the year 2000, and I joined Rick. I joined Rick as his partner and Chairman of Evergreen

Advisors. That was '07, '08. And then, Larry Hogan shocked the world in 2014 when he ran for governor. He had never held any type of office in his life. I introduced him at a dinner one night, and I said, "The Governor and I compared notes. We didn't even get elected to student government." Here we were, the Governor and Secretary of Commerce, and you were looking at two guys who couldn't get elected to anything. And now, here we were. Net of that, Rich, is I did get a phone call from one of his key folks soon after he got elected, said, "Have you ever thought about being Secretary of Commerce?" I said, "Not on my radar screen." Within a couple weeks, I was meeting with the Governor and his transition office.

0:05:05 He said, "Mike, I ran on Change Maryland. This state's been heading the wrong way for too long. I've got 22 cabinet secretaries that I need to select. I'm not looking for any mulligans. I absolutely need to get your selection right because we've got to get the business community heading in a new direction." Besides being married to the same person for 47 years, having three grown kids and eight grandchildren—I think your number's eight, too. Is that what I heard you say?

Rich Bendis: I got eight, too. It'll be 55 years married this year.

Mike Gill: Wow. Well, as Lou Holtz would say, if you said 55 years, he would say 110 years together.

Rich Bendis: It feels like about 150 some days.

Mike Gill: [Laugh] I think you have the ability to delete your podcast stuff, right? You can't say that.

Rich Bendis: That's OK, she understands.

Mike Gill: I had a blast, was in the role for the first four years of the Governor's first term. Quick story, he got reelected, of course.

0:06:04 I met with him in Annapolis, and he said, "Hey, Mike. You think you got four more years in you?" I said, "Gov, I have had so much fun, I can't thank you enough for giving me the opportunity." I said, "But I'm going back to the private sector." And he paused for a second and said, "Take me with you." Thank goodness he was only half kidding because he has

done one heck of a job for all of Maryland. As a bipartisan registered Republican, he's knocked it out of the park, and I'm totally biased.

Rich Bendis: No, I think he's done a fantastic job. And part of that is surrounding yourself with good people. And your selection as the chief salesman for the state of Maryland has been a very good selection, really.

Mike Gill: I'm fine with that. I'm happy to be the chief salesperson.

Rich Bendis: There's nothing wrong with being a salesperson, right, Mike?

Mike Gill: I started as a salesperson. You and I are going out the same way we came in.

Rich Bendis: We're never going to stop selling. Always be selling. ABS, always be selling, right?

0:07:02

Mike Gill: Exactly.

Rich Bendis: Let's talk a little bit about—you did your first four years, you had a little break when Secretary Schulz came in, and now you're back again. Talk a little bit about responsibilities as the Secretary, what you focused on the first four years, and now you're going to have this little shorter term the second time with what you've been handed by Secretary Schulz. Talk a little bit about your primary roles, and that transition, and where you're focused today.

Mike Gill: I said to a group recently, it was a military group, where they use nothing but acronyms. I think they had the ability to do an entire presentation with just acronyms. And I said to them, "You've given me an idea." I was thinking about an acronym for us at Commerce and what we do. Because people sometimes say, "What do you do?" I said, L-FAS. And they said, "What does that mean?" Well, the L's for listen. How can you bring about change and be helpful if you first don't listen and understand what the issue is and how you might be able to position resources to solve that problem?

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And then, the F is facilitate. By really knowing enough about all the moving parts that are out there and how those moving parts might contribute to the solution, bring them together. The A is to activate and

advocate. That is, to get out there. Life sciences, we're the best. Cyber, we're the best. Aerospace, we're the best. And really, then, try to promote organizations. And then, the last is really to support. We created at Commerce, when I first came in the job, what I call the Culture of Yes. And that is, have a positive attitude about everything, and it's amazing, when you do that, how often you really can solve problems. That was kind of like getting Commerce off the ground. We've got 200-plus people that make up team Commerce.

0:09:00 We're all on the same page. The other cabinet secretaries, all on the same page about everyone's a customer, and, "How can we help you?" That was a little bit of it.

Rich Bendis: I had the Listen, Facilitate, Activate, and Advocate, but the S surprised me. I thought you were going to say sell. But you said Support.

Mike Gill: Well, actually, I put a C in there one time, I called it FACS. The C was just cheerlead. It's like Forest Gump. Forest Gump, the great expression was, if you can't sing, sing loud.

Rich Bendis: [Laugh] You got it. And basically, I would imagine that acronym works both in your first term and now in your second term as a secretary.

Mike Gill: Kelly did a terrific job in her three years in this role. I did not have to lead the organization through the pandemic. Not sure, I guess I probably would've survived it. But Kelly took on a different set of circumstances than I ever had to deal with. And Commerce really had to ship their—you talk about pivot, and we heard that word only about four million times during the two years.

0:10:04 But Kelly really had to pivot hard, and team Commerce went from being a proactive, "How can we help you?" to tens of thousands of small businesses in really difficult situations, and using a lot of programs the state created, and some that came down from the feds, to try to help those organizations survive. For me, coming back, Rich, the pandemic was really winding down. When the Gov reached out to me the beginning of January to tell me Kelly was going to be leaving so she could focus on her next job, he said, "Mike, my feeling is, let's just finish strong." We finished each other's sentence about how we wanted to spend the rest of 2022. Finish strong. That's been on our mind all the time in everything we do.

Rich Bendis: Basically, the infrastructure and the programming's there, it's just really implementation in the last year of something that it's taken seven years to build.

0:11:05 One other thing, and I'll digress just a second on the pandemic, is that I think Maryland doesn't know how lucky it is to have had Governor Hogan during the pandemic versus some of the other governors in some of the other states who didn't have a clue as to what to do during the pandemic. Because the leadership he showed made it so strong for Marylanders because he was ahead of the curve rather than always being behind the curve during the pandemic.

Mike Gill: You couldn't have said it better. I have to introduce him, I think, next weekend at an event, and I might just take those words you just had when I introduce him. But you're exactly right. Think about it. It seems like most of the states in the country either lined up to the left or lined up to the right, and they were all pivoting off of their leader. Whoever their governor was in those other states, it seemed as if they had a very partisan position out of the gate relative to the pandemic, relative to COVID, relative to Omicron.

0:12:08 And you're right, Governor Hogan calls himself the common sense conservative. Popularity numbers are still in the mid-70s, which is just absolutely incredible. After seven-plus years, eventually it seems like people are going to get tired of you. It's a wonder there hasn't been a big movement to say, "We want to be able to have a three-term governor in the state of Maryland." I might just add a quick comment to just dovetail with yours. Heard this expression back in the 80s. Shadow of the leader. It's real simple. As a leader, what shadow do you cast? Is it one of being thoughtful? Is it one of all about the people? Is it one of balance? Is it one of listening to everyone and then doing your very best to make the best decision you can? I think the shadow that the Governor has been casting, and the shadow he certainly cast during the pandemic, we came out in really good shape, all things considered.

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Rich Bendis: I love your analogy about the shadow because in my early days, as I was getting educated by large companies, one of them sent me to a weeklong training program on how to build a quality organization. And the shadow

analogy came up and basically said, "You're only going to be as strong as your shadow will reach," meaning that if you don't have good people on both sides of you or around you, you're not going to be as an effective leader. But the stronger you make the team around you, like you're doing with team Commerce or team Maryland, the stronger the implementation's going to be for what you're trying to achieve.

Mike Gill: And if your leader truly does cast what most people would agree would be the correct shadow, they will have the people around them that reflect it. And then, it just cascades from there, doesn't it?

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Rich Bendis: It just continues to build. And hopefully, we can keep that momentum going post-Hogan, but let's worry about the last year here first. This podcast is called BioTalk, so now that we've talked a little bit about the general economy and what's going on in Maryland, let's talk about, really, one of the most important industries there is within the state of Maryland, which is the BioHealth, Life Science industry. And even during the pandemic, and a lot of listeners may not know this, and we're talking with Secretary Gill, Secretary of Commerce for the state of Maryland, Warp Speed was throwing out billions and billions of dollars throughout the United States. Most people don't know it, but Maryland got about 40% of the Warp Speed dollars to work on vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics to deal with the pandemic because we had the assets and the organizations that could really mobilize quickly to deal with investing that money to come up with solutions around the pandemic.

Mike Gill: We are knocking the cover off the ball.

0:15:00 We can do more, we know that. Because you and I and tens of thousands that are in this space are never satisfied. We're greedy, we want it all, but I just want to complement you because you have played such an important role for over a decade as it relates to BioHealth in Maryland and keeping us focused, asking the right questions, bringing the right people together, challenging individuals to do more. It's one of your mantras. I've been there, I was on your board. You are constantly pushing the needle. "We can do more." But I wanted to make sure that I shared that with you because I haven't really had a chance, and this is a perfect time to do it.

Rich Bendis: Well, thank you, Mike.

Mike Gill: But going back to the pandemic, going back to the moneys that flowed into Maryland to be part of the country's response, and to be able to get us to a better position, you're right. We had a whole range. And then, some companies that positioned during it all. We certainly had Emergent play an important role during it, even with the J&J issue, which was eventually resolved.

0:16:03 They still played a major role in terms of providing vaccine for...

Rich Bendis: And still do.

Mike Gill: I'm a big fan of Emergent. Dan Abdun-Nabi, previous CEO, was a terrific leader. Bob Kramer, terrific leader. They play an important role in life sciences. Novavax, they positioned themselves well to be able to use the pandemic to advance the company because it was in their sweet spot. I don't think they have the final approvals yet, but they're going to be in a good position to be a resource for our country and the world in the future. Companies like Ellume out of Australia, they've created a company that is able to do diagnostic-type activities, and they're a player. I've got to just share this with you. I'm a numbers guy to a degree. Not to where I want to get analytical about numbers, but there are some really startling numbers, and you know them well. It's almost like one of those Carnacs or something. Like, I say, "54,000," and you say...

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Rich Bendis: Life science jobs in Maryland.

Mike Gill: Yeah. And then, I say a number like 21-billion. And you say...

Rich Bendis: \$21 billion is the economics that are generated by the life science industry in Maryland.

Mike Gill: And two, you can use two a couple different ways. \$2 billion, that's about where the VC's run rate is.

Rich Bendis: \$2 billion was last year's venture capital investment in Maryland companies, which is a record. That was almost about an \$800-million increase over our past record, Mike.

- Mike Gill:** And another two, starts with a two, and maybe it's more like two and a half, research dollars.
- Rich Bendis:** NIH dollars that go into the state of Maryland academic institutions. We just passed San Francisco, and now we're number three. We used to be number four. We just passed San Francisco as the third-largest NIH-funded state in the United States.
- Mike Gill:** We're just little, old Maryland.
- Rich Bendis:** Yeah, it's little, old Maryland. Yeah.
- Mike Gill:** And then, the last couple numbers I like, I like 74, which is a number I've seen.
- 0:18:05 Whether it's 70, 74, or 80, the number of federal labs that play into our life sciences.
- Rich Bendis:** Yeah, we use basically 78. Your numbers are good, we're in the 70s. We have more federal labs in the state of Maryland than any other state, and that generates, a lot of people don't know it, probably about \$18 billion every year of federal funds that comes into Maryland in research every year, and that's replenished every year. And then, in addition to that, you take about \$3.5 billion that goes into Johns Hopkins and the University System of Maryland, and you're really talking about \$21 billion of federal funding coming into our federal labs and academic institutions in the state of Maryland every year.
- Mike Gill:** [Laugh] I was thinking about it as I was anticipating us being together this afternoon and looking at some notes. If you and I were just a couple stock junkies, maybe we work for JP Morgan.
- 0:19:04 Maybe we work for one of the big houses. And we have to look at life sciences. And every one of our 50 states has a symbol. Of course, in Maryland, we just have a two-letter symbol. It's MD. We're a buy. We're a buy with big B, big U, big Y, if you're trying to put your finger somehow or another on, "How's Maryland doing in life sciences?"
- Rich Bendis:** One of the biggest mistakes I made is that when we created BioHealth Innovation over ten years ago, I talked to Dan Abdun-Nabi, and you brought him up, from Emergent. I said, "Why don't we create a Maryland life science stock index and track all of the companies in Maryland based

on where they are today?" And if we would've made an investment and created our own mutual fund of Maryland public companies over the last ten years, the returns would've exceeded all of the other investments I would've made personally by doing that. And you mentioned Novavax. Novavax was in the pits.

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Their stock was trading at a buck. I just looked, and I think their stock's around \$53 today. But it's been trading well over \$100. It's amazing how many people who have been affiliated with Novavax have now generated personal income that can be reinvested back in the economy because they'll invest in some of the small businesses, and there'll be a number of spinouts coming out of Novavax, AstraZeneca, GSK, Emergent that are going to fuel our economy, and that's what was missing. We didn't have as much of an entrepreneurial economy, we had a research economy in life sciences in Maryland. Now, we've transferred to where we've become a commercial economy where we actually have more revenues, you have products, and you have manufacturing, not just R&D happening in this state.

Mike Gill:

I was thinking about the fact that if there is such a thing as heroes to the people in the life sciences space, like the leadership in Novavax.

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Like 15 years ago, when Wayne Hockmeyer had a company called MedImmune, and the FDA told him, "Too bad, but what you've been working on for the last ten years and have spent \$400 million on just doesn't work. So give it up." He had about 200 employees, NEA was their number-one investor. He called all 200 together. He said, "We don't agree with the FDA, we're going to double down." And I think about maybe two years later, he sold it to AstraZeneca for billions. I think Teddy Roosevelt and Winston Churchill would have to be the heroes for any leader in life sciences. And probably Archie Moore because I think Archie Moore set a record for the guy who got knocked down the most times in his professional boxing career and still won world championships.

Rich Bendis:

Amazing, yeah.

Mike Gill:

That's the life sciences space.

Rich Bendis:

Well, that's the biotechnology industry.

0:22:00 Basically, you're not going to hit it on the first time you get at the plate. Sometimes you're going to have that change, make multiple pivots within your company, and ultimately be successful. Just think about Martine Rothblatt at United Therapeutics. Creator of Sirius Radio, and going from Sirius Radio into biotechnology because of a disease that her daughter had. Now, manufacturing artificial lungs out of pig tissue. It is just amazing. When we look at manufacturing of artificial organs that we have, you've got the pioneer in the world sitting in Silver Spring, Maryland with United Therapeutics. It's amazing the innovation and technology we have within this state. Let's talk one other thing that Governor Hogan did, and that is, if you have a vibrant industry, but yet you're not exactly sure what direction to take it, what you want to do is assemble the leaders within that industry to come together. And he had the foresight to create the Life Science Advisory Board. And I know that you've had a chance in your first term to be very active in serving as the chair of that with different leaders.

0:23:04 And we now have Chancellor Perman from the University System of Maryland, who is the new chair, Ulyana Desiderio from your department is helping support the Life Science Advisory Board. And I know that in your last year here, you'll become reengaged with the LSAB. Talk a little bit about what your experience was with the LSAB in your first four years, and now coming back into the LSAB in your second term here.

Mike Gill: Full disclosure, whoever's in the Secretary of Commerce role, there has to be, I don't know, 20, 25, 30 plus or minus boards, commissions, whatever that, in theory, I'm on all of them, and in theory, I'm supposed to go to all the meetings. [Laugh] Everything's theoretical, right? Of those things that are part of being the Secretary of Commerce and being engaged, I would put LSAB right up there at the top. We have two or three things that are very valuable, none more valuable than Life Science Advisory Board.

0:24:5 You're right in that it was our good fortune early on to have Dan Abdun-Nabi raise his hand and say, "I'll take it on." And when you get a Dan Abdun-Nabi—and the Governor selected the members, but we send the members to the Gov, and the Gov vets them, some due diligence. We assembled a great group of people. And to this day—I'm now participating in a meeting we had about a month ago. The board members are still super strong. As you pointed out, Jay Perman, who's kind of busy, being

the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland. He could've given it up. It'd have been fine if he had raised his hand and said, "I'm really kind of overwhelmed." But he loves it, he's good at it, he's a good leader. The Life Science Advisory Board. It goes back a little bit to my earlier remarks about what does Commerce do. But when I think about it, we did put together a strategic plan back during my first four years.

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They've all stuck, some of the things that were kind of the key elements of that strategic plan. One of the things we talked about was just raising awareness of life sciences and the resources and assets that exist in the state of Maryland. I can remember when I first met you, we would talk often, and you would bring it up at board meetings about us needing to do a better job of really understanding and knowing what assets we have. Because we didn't know. I think we've come a little bit closer to having our arms around that one. And LSAB, I think, helped to kind of bring that to the top of the list of to-dos. Increasing access to capital. That was by far, back six, seven, eight years ago, the number-one topic, even more so than workforce. I think all of a sudden, now they've changed places. We've done a hell of a job on the access to capital. As people said all along, if you have great ideas, that the money will find you.

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You still have to engage with the money, and you still have to present ideas to them and give them reasons why life sciences in Maryland is a big deal. And connectivity, we talked a lot about that. That had a lot to do with workforce, had a lot to do with the industry itself, to be more proactive. And I think because of that, every two-year college in the state, and there are 16-plus two-years like Montgomery College, Anne Arundel, and others, all of them have programs in workforce specific to life sciences in some aspect. Now, we're starting to see more tailored workforce initiatives along the lines of manufacturing. Because that's another area, Rich. When you first got here, we were nowhere relative to manufacturing. Lot of great research, lot of smart people, oncology, infectious disease. In some of these areas, we're a leader. But in manufacturing, that was not a sweet spot.

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Now, all of a sudden, we're strong and getting better every day. And the Governor introduced a program, More Jobs for Marylanders, that has really helped to fuel the growth of manufacturing in life sciences in Maryland. It's a very attractive incentive program.

Rich Bendis: I think that needs to be renewed, Mike. One of your jobs as the Secretary of Commerce is to get that continued into the future because I know all of our developers think that's an extremely important program to help attract other manufacturing companies into the state.

Mike Gill: It got tweaked some, but we did get a legislation passed. It was going to expire. It was going to sunset in June. We got it stretched out for at least another few years, tweaked a few things on the total number of years that someone could get the dollars. But it's still very rich, still very attractive. We didn't take anything away from any of the organizations that already have it. Going forward, just put a few more little walls around it. It got passed, and it got extended, so that's a good thing.

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Rich Bendis: Well, congratulations because I had heard from a few of the people—I told them I was going to be talking to you, and they said, "Emphasize that program," because they think it's extremely important for our future growth within the state. We've been talking about all those good things that have happened in Maryland. We still have some areas for improvement. As you look at where you might focus or where the Governor might focus in this last year, or set the stage for future enhancements for what we need to do in this important life science and BioHealth industry, where do you see some of the priorities or areas for improvement in the future, Mike?

Mike Gill: We started using an expression around Commerce a few years ago, "Think bigger, go faster." And I think it's one of the things that when you first came into the marketplace here, it was another thing you talked about. And that is, we had these great assets, but they were underappreciated. We should've had more pride and been more excited about it because we've got something that most of the other states, at least 45 or 46, would love to have.

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That's a simple expression, "Think bigger, and go faster." What do I think are some areas? I think we have a lot more room for growth and expansion by doing a better job of connecting the dots between the public sector and the private sector. You could argue that in the public sector, at Commerce, having programs More Jobs for Marylanders, having the BITC investment tax credit for biotech companies that can

allow them to raise capital a little bit easier than they might have because of it, that looks like public-private. But I think we have even more opportunities. And it's only been in recent history, it seems like, in state government where there's more discussion around public and private partnerships. Maybe there ought to be a cabinet secretary called the Secretary of Public-Private Partnerships. And an area like life sciences is so perfect for that. As you and I know, we've had a conversation, White Flint, the WMATA site with 13, 14 acres, trying to come up with a big idea for Montgomery County that can grow life sciences, in maybe a different kind of way, not in a research way necessarily.

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But the Governor provided \$10 million to be the basically seed money towards an AI institute, where the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, working together, would establish and oversee this institute with heavy, heavy emphasis on working with the life sciences space on how they can do even a better job of using artificial intelligence on research and on so many other aspects. That's a great public-private initiative. We've got all the labs, we've got universities, we're as smart as can be in the state of Maryland. I would say public-private partnerships, manufacturing, I think we can do more. We've got a pipeline, right now, Rich. I don't have it in front of me, but I'd say we have at least ten companies that we are actively in discussions with who are in the life sciences space specific to manufacturing about either expanding in Maryland or coming to Maryland for the first time.

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Can you imagine? We could no more have said something like that even three or four years ago.

Rich Bendis:

That's really exciting, and talk about a transformation. And when we talk about some of the areas for improvement, one of the things that's happening, I know there's work going on with some of the academic institutions at all different levels, we need more skilled manufacturing workers, and that doesn't necessarily mean you have to have a master's degree or a PhD. We're talking about people that, through the community college system, have those skills to go into the manufacturing workplace, and it doesn't take four, six, eight years to get the experience you need to do that. I know there are plants to address that, but I think we'll be more successful the more we have the people ready and waiting

to go into that manufacturing workforce for some of these companies that want to grow and come to Maryland.

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Mike Gill: I've just got to put another kudos in there for the Gov. He got a wonderful piece of recognition last year where the Biotech Innovation Organization...

Rich Bendis: Yeah, the International Bio Organization.

Mike Gill: They named him Governor of the Year for his leadership specific to the pandemic. But again, I just think it's the way he governs. He governs as a common sense elected official who doesn't have an ego, who just tries to make good decisions. As you and I said, try to put good people in these various positions, and let them do stuff.

Rich Bendis: Well, that was well-deserved, Mike. I always enjoy chatting with you, and I think we've covered some of the high spots related to our industry and what's going on in Maryland. But is there anything that you wanted to bring up that I haven't asked or that's on the top of your mind right now, you'd like to let the listeners know what's in Mike Gill's mind right now?

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Mike Gill: [Laugh] It's funny, my wife will say that sometimes, Rich. "Mike, what is in your mind?"

Rich Bendis: Well, we can't talk about some of those other things, though, Mike.

Mike Gill: The glass of water, for me, as it is for you, is really, really half-full. If you look across the state—and we're a very, very diverse state. Prince George's County looks nothing like Montgomery County, which looks nothing like Western Maryland, which looks nothing like Southern Maryland, which looks nothing like the shore or Baltimore. But every single one of them has something, and in some cases, multiple things, that they're really good at. And if you have good assets, and you have good leadership, and you stay focused, it's unbelievable how much you can accomplish.

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We've got to do a better job in Baltimore. We know that. We have two of the great institutions in healthcare, in every way, both clinical as well as

research, in Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland. We have a lot of smart people, we're located in an incredible place. Our friend Christy has been a huge asset to life sciences in Maryland and the work that she's done with Fast-Forward at Johns Hopkins, and Smart People with Cool Ideas, and helping to incubate them and bring them along. But we've got a lot more work to do across the board. In this particular region, we do need more help on the wet lab space, we are rocking and rolling in Montgomery County. We're rocking and rolling up through 270 and Frederick County. We need more in Baltimore, and that's something that working with you, working with Christy, working with LSAB, working hard to see if we can't get more of those important assets long term into play. But across the state of Maryland, everybody's got a good story to tell.

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And I'm just hoping, Rich, as you are, too, that whoever the next governor is, that they don't lose sight, they really don't lose sight of what has been accomplished during the Hogan Administration. And from it, they identify those things that have really been the bedrock of Larry Hogan's eight years as Governor of Maryland and aren't going to be quick to say, "OK, that was then, now is now. That was then." Be smart enough. Whoever the next governor is, be intelligent enough to say, "This works, this works, this works. I think we can do this one a little differently." And if we do that, then the momentum that we've created will continue.

Rich Bendis:

You're right, Mike. I think the foundation and the momentum that's been laid is, it would be hard for someone to fail based on what has been laid out over those last eight years. Regardless of who does come in, I think there's a great chance to keep some of this momentum going forward.

0:36:03

Which leads me to one of my last questions for you. This is your second run at Secretary of Commerce. You're going to be done coming in after the inauguration or whenever that ends. What's next? You going back to Evergreen? Or what happens if the next governor comes in and says, "Hey, Mike, do you want to do a round three?"

Mike Gill:

I'd say, "Maybe if I can do it for Vero Beach, Florida," or something like that. No, Rich, I'm not going to say it too loud, but I will share with you that when I said to the Gov when he said, "Look, come on back, it'll be our last dance," I said, "I'm all in. Let's go, Gov." Then, I did say, "I've got one request." He said, "Yeah, what's that?" "I'd like to be on the shortlist

for ambassador to Ireland." I'm not saying anything, but crazier things have happened, right?

Rich Bendis: You're right. And 2023, you need to put a date on there. The Naval Academy's playing Notre Dame in Dublin in 2023.

Mike Gill: There we go.

0:37:01

Rich Bendis: We have both a reason to go. I know you're a big Naval Academy supporter, and I'm going to be a Notre Dame supporter, so let's go to Dublin next year and have a little party.

Mike Gill: Yeah, let's go check out the real estate.

Rich Bendis: Yeah, that would be great. We've been talking with Secretary Mike Gill, Secretary of Commerce, state of Maryland. Never a dull moment, talking to Mike. And we know that he's going to continue to carry the banner forward, talking about and selling Maryland to people around the world. Mike, thank you very much for being on BioTalk.

Mike Gill: Thank you, Rich.

Rich Bendis: Maybe we'll do this one last time before you leave this administration.

Mike Gill: I'd love to, Rich. And thank you for all you do, Rich. Thank you so much.

Narrator: Thanks for listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis.

End of recording