



**MARYLAND**  
Chamber of Commerce

**LEGISLATIVE POSITION:**

**Favorable**

**House Bill 163 - Labor and Employment - Labor Organizations - Right to Work**

**House Economic Matters Committee**

**Tuesday, February 4, 2020**

Dear Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 4,500 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees and families. Through our work, we seek to maintain a balance in the relationship between employers and employees within the state through the establishment of policies that promote fairness and ease restrictive burdens.

As introduced, HB 163 specifies that an employer may not require, as a condition of employment or continued employment, that an employee or prospective employee join or remain a member of a labor organization; pay any dues, fees, assessments or other charges to a labor organization; or pay any charity or another third party an equivalent amount in lieu of a payment to a labor organization.

This bill repeals various provisions of state law that authorize an employer, including the state and units of government, to require that an employee pay a fee (service, maintenance or representation fee) to a labor organization to which the employee is not a member. Furthermore, this bill allows an employee, or prospective employee, to pursue a civil cause of action in circuit court against an employer who violates the bill's provisions.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce values employee choice, and this bill furthers this philosophy by guaranteeing the employee a right to freedom of association and their choice to participate in union representation or not. Forcing employees or prospective employees into unionization and payment for dues or fees as a condition of employment violates this principle and ultimately drives up labor costs in a competitive business environment.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **Favorable Report** on **HB 163**.

MDCHAMBER.ORG

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