



Bill No: SB486
Title: Labor and Employment - Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act)
Committee: Finance
Hearing: February 11, 2021
Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **SB486 a priority on the [2021 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.**

SB486 will provide essential workers with much needed protections in the workplace to ensure employee health and safety during pandemics.

Essential workers are experiencing during the COVID 19 pandemic, the majority of whom are women and people of color. To date, essential workers have experienced unsafe working conditions where they have been physically harmed, loss of pay and benefits, health hazards, and unjust work orders. From COVID-19's inception, thousands of essential workers have also contracted this virus, and this bill not only provides protection to decrease the contraction rate, but it also provides other safeguards that give workers the confidence and security of knowing that they are not infecting their colleagues, family or community.

If this bill is enacted, it will provide women with protections and procedures against unfair treatment by employers, including arbitrary retaliation. The protections in this bill will ensure better standards to have safe and healthy working conditions so women do not have to engage in unsafe work practices that put their lives in danger. It will allow women to receive pandemic pay and the opportunity to be covered by health insurance during pandemics. Workers need plans of action during pandemics and as such, this bill mandates that a fair plan be set in place so workers understand their responsibilities during this and any future pandemics.

For many women, pandemic and bereavement leave is also a big factor in order to care for their families and due to this, this bill ensures that workers are given leave to handle various severe circumstances. Last but certainly not least, this bill provides women the right to refuse dangerous work without retaliation if management encourages female essential workers to put their lives at risk. Conclusively, this bill provides workplace protections for essential workers to ensure that have safe working conditions during pandemics.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB486.

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com • www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org

MLAW's 2021 Agenda is supported by the following organizations:

AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Easton Branch
AAUW Kensington Rockville Branch
American Association of University Women (AAUW) Maryland
Anne Arundel County NOW
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence Survivors
Business and Professional Women Maryland
Calvert County Commission for Women
Cambridge Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Charles County Commission for Women
Childway Early Learning Center
Church Women United
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Annapolis Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Phi Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Fort Washington Alumnae Chapter
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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Montgomery County MD Alumnae Chapter
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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Potomac Valley Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter
For All Seasons, Inc.
Hug Don't Shoot
Human Trafficking Prevention Project, University of Baltimore School of Law
League of Women Voters of Prince George's County (LWVPGC)
Lee Law, LLC
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Justice Project
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland NOW
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
Mission 50
MoCoWoMen
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County NOW (National Organization for *Women*)
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club
Montgomery County Young Democrats
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
National Coalition of 100 Black Women., Inc. Anne Arundel County Chapter
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince George's County Chapter
Planned Parenthood of Maryland
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington DC
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
Reproductive Justice Inside
Stella's Girls Inc.
The Rest Of A Life (TROAL)
Top Ladies of Distinction
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Patuxent River Chapter
Top Ladies of Distinction, Prince George's County Chapter
UAW Local 1183
WISE
Women's Equality Day 2020 Celebration Coalition
Women's Law Center of Maryland