



City of Havre de Grace

711 PENNINGTON AVENUE, HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND 21078
WWW.HAVREDEGRACEMD.COM

410- 939-1800
410- 575-7043

February 11, 2021

The Honorable Senator Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Oppose - Senate Bill 486 - Labor and Employment – Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act)

Chair Kelley and the Honorable Members of the Finance Committee:

The Havre de Grace Tourism Advisory Board opposes Senate Bill 486.

The City of Havre de Grace is a historic waterfront community and tourist destination located in Harford County. The current city administration has made significant strategic investments and policy decisions in the areas of economic development and tourism that often go hand in hand. This includes attracting new business and stimulating economic development through the creation of tourism-related activities. During a normal budget year, the city invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in police, public works, and administrative services towards dozens of events held within the city. This action has resulted in Havre de Grace gaining recognition as a premier destination to visit and open a business.

Throughout the pandemic, the City administration has been committed to business-friendly policies that provide assistance to businesses and relax many regulations, while maintaining and encouraging safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Unfortunately, however, like so many local economies across Maryland, the Havre de Graces business community, including its tourism sector, has been devastated by the dual COVID-19 catastrophic health emergency and the concurrent financial crisis.

As a result, Havre de Grace businesses have been forced to close, have experienced severe financial hardships, or have seen a significant reduction in business.

It is unknown at this time how long full economic recovery will take and how many of these businesses will remain open. During these trying times, government policies should not impose stringent requirements whose effect will strike the final death blow to those who are fortunate to survive. Maryland taxpayers and business owners expect the actions taken by government leaders will help local businesses- not prolong their suffering.

The consequences of the passage of SB 486 cannot be immediately measured and will take years to realize. What is certain is that its passage will exacerbate the current economic crisis and draw out the distress and uncertainty experienced by so many Marylanders, and will punish those with the fortitude to stick it out and continue to keep employees on the payroll.

The Havre de Grave Tourism Advisory Board requests the committee give SB 486 an unfavorable report.