



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0486
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT – EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS DURING AN
EMERGENCY (MARYLAND ESSENTIAL WORKERS’ PROTECTION ACT)**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Augustine

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0486 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

We have all been through a lot this year. In Maryland, as in states and countries around the world, we all got to learn just how much we rely on front line workers – people who have to go to work even when it is dangerous to do so. They are our heroes. They put themselves in danger in order that we all can be safer.

How can we help make their lives, and the lives of their families, safer and let them know that we understand and appreciate their sacrifice? We can start by giving them some basic protections of their own –

- safe and hygienic working conditions
- 14 days of paid sick leave, so they can afford to quarantine if they are exposed to the virus
- free testing and information about others who are sick around them
- hazard pay when they are forced to come in and work around other sick people
- health and bereavement leave

Many of these things SHOULD have been provided to our front-line workers all along. But so many of them do not even have safe working conditions because employers don't want to spend the money. Many workers have become sick or even died, because of the lack of concern their employers had for their basic safety. It's time to change that and ensure that we work just as hard to keep them, and their families, safe. It is time to support our heroes.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.