



**Testimony on House Bill 0698 - Labor and Employment - State Minimum Wage Rate - Increase
Before the House Economic Matters Committee**

Honorable C. T. Wilson, Chair

February 22, 2022

Brian England, Owner, BA Auto Care

Position: SUPPORT

My name is Brian England. My wife and I own BA Auto Care, an auto service and repair facility in Columbia. I'm also on the board of the Howard County Citizens Association and a member of Business for a Fair Minimum Wage.

I support the effort to strengthen Maryland's minimum wage law via House Bill 698. I am a strong supporter of Maryland's minimum wage increase to \$15, and of efforts that ensure Maryland's minimum wage keeps up with the rising cost of living for the benefit of working people, businesses and our economy.

BA Auto Care has been in business since 1978 and I'm proud to say we see a strong future as a family business. My daughter is now our general manager.

We have won many awards, including Maryland Small Business of the Year and Howard County's Best Auto Care Facility this year and for nearly all of the other 44 years we have been in business.

Our employees are a big reason why we are successful. And that starts with us valuing our employees. As we see every day on the shop floor, fairly paid employees provide better service, work harder, and are more productive. They can focus their attention on their jobs and not be in a state of worry and fear about how they will make rent or heat their homes or afford school supplies and clothes for their growing kids.

Our employees stay with us for a long time and develop a rapport with customers, which is very good for business. We have employees who have been with us for 9, 11, 16, 21 and even 36 years!

Have you ever wondered why when you visit some businesses their staff is frequently changing? It's a good bet they are paying an inadequate wage.



It makes more sense to have a higher minimum wage and lower employee turnover than a low minimum wage with high turnover. High turnover costs a lot of time and money in continual hiring and training expenses. And it alienates customers.

When businesses pay so little their employees can't make ends meet, it hurts everyone. I see working people having to choose between replacing bald tires and putting in a new battery. I see working people struggling to keep their car on the road, delaying needed services to the point that their car has a major failure.

When businesses pay fair wages, it's good for all businesses because employees become consumers with more money to spend.

Raising the minimum wage lifts everyone up. Higher wages mean families can rely less on the social safety net just to keep a roof overhead and food on the table. Higher wages mean workers have more money to spend at all kinds of businesses. It's a win-win that results in a much stronger local economy and community.

I applaud our Delegates for working to ensure our minimum wage is a wage that working people across Maryland can live on. That's essential if our state is going to grow and thrive together.

I respectfully urge your support for HB0698. Thank you for your time.

Brian England
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