

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL HB0698 - FAVORABLE  
Labor and Employment - State Minimum Wage Rate - Increase

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and  
members of the Economic Matters  
Committee

FROM: Chris Apple  
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Income inequality has become a serious issue in this country over the last several decades. Many people want a stable job that can provide for their families, but that dream is increasingly out of reach for many Marylanders.

Over the past 44 years, the lowest 20% of incomes has grown at just 0.25% per year.<sup>1</sup> That rate has not kept pace with the fast-rising costs of healthcare or rent.<sup>2</sup> And because Maryland's cost of living is higher than the national average, there is often a higher financial burden on people earning minimum wage in this state.<sup>3</sup>

While Maryland has implemented an admirable policy of stepped increases to minimum wage, I believe we can and should do more. With inflation rising more quickly than expected, it's more important than ever to ensure all people's wages can keep up with the cost of living.

This bill will hasten relief to many Marylanders working minimum wage jobs. It will begin to close the income inequality gap, and ensure that more Marylanders can provide for their families and build wealth for the future. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 698.

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<sup>1</sup> Apple, Chris. "Real Wages Aren't Rising." <https://medium.com/@capwriting/real-wages-arent-rising-fccb3b320ffb>

<sup>2</sup> Apple, Chris. "Real Wages Aren't Realistic." <https://medium.com/@capwriting/real-wages-arent-realistic-ec60637d0850>

<sup>3</sup> "Cost of Living in Maryland." [https://www.bestplaces.net/cost\\_of\\_living/state/maryland](https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/state/maryland)