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To: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee and the Senate Finance Committee

From: Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, Maryland State Bar Association

Date: February 9, 2024

Subject: HB 136 and SB 233 - Employment Standards, Prevailing Wage, and Living Wage - Employer Adverse Actions - Prohibition

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports HB 136 and SB 233. This bill allows the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to conduct an investigation on the Commissioner's own initiative or on receipt of a written complaint. In addition, within 90 days of receiving a written complaint related to the five affected statutes, the Commissioner must investigate and attempt to resolve the issue informally through mediation.

We appreciate and support this provision of this bill. Informal mediation is an effective tool to resolve disputes before further legal actions are taken. We believe that this specific language gives the parties an opportunity to settle their differences without the expense of going to court. At the same time, courts will benefit from the likely reduction in the number of cases filed which crowd our dockets.

Should you have any questions, please contact Erin Gable, Esq., Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council, edgable@aacc.edu.