



## **Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce**

*In Opposition to  
Senate Bill 160—Labor and Employment—Payment of Minimum Wage—Tipped Employees  
February 1, 2024  
Senate Finance Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 550 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in opposition to Senate Bill 160—Labor and Employment-Payment of Minimum Wage-Tipped Employees.

The Greater Bethesda Chamber is opposed to legislation like Senate Bill 160 that would eliminate the tipped wage, even if that change is phased in over time. Such a policy shift would have a detrimental effect on restaurants, who already operate with razor-thin margins. In addition, Maryland’s restaurants continue to struggle as they recover from the COVID pandemic and inflation-related increases in costs. Many would be forced to increase menu prices and reduce staff. In fact, that is exactly what is happening in DC right now. A report conducted recently by the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight, in surveying full-service DC restaurants and the impact of Initiative 82, found that many restaurants plan to reduce service hours, reduce menu items or, sadly, “probably close.”

We strongly believe the current tipping model in restaurants provides an opportunity for workers to earn far beyond minimum wage while never making less than minimum wage. This is why we opposed legislation introduced last year in Montgomery County, and it’s why we oppose Senate Bill 160. We urge an unfavorable vote.