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Revenues



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 233: Labor and Employment - Mandatory Meetings on Religious Matters - Employee Attendance and Participation (Maryland Worker Freedom Act)

Economic Matters Committee

Thursday, January 30, 2025 - 1:00 PM

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Captive Audience meetings are the tool of choice for union busters, in which an employer holds a mandatory meeting during working hours for the purpose of discouraging employees from organizing and participating in a union. Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, New York, Washington, Vermont, Oregon, Hawaii, and several other states have recently enacted legislation prohibiting captive audience meetings.

A recent ruling by the National Labor Relations Board determined captive audience meetings are unlawful under the National Labor Relations Act, as they are used to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in exercising the right to unionize.

However, this decision could be challenged under this incoming administration, as just this week President Trump removed the NLRB General Counsel who initiated the review of captive audience meetings. Therefore, it is imperative to establish this legislation under state law in order to protect our workers.

The Maryland Worker Freedom Act would protect employees from retaliation and threats including discharge, discipline, and other penalties assessed as a result of the employee declining to attend or participate in an employer-sponsored meeting during which the employer communicates their opinion regarding religious matters or political matters. The bill would prohibit employers from refusing to hire an applicant as a result of the applicant's refusal to attend or participate in a meeting as defined above. Religious matters prohibited in this context relate to religious belief, affiliation, practice, or the decision to join or support a religion. Political matters prohibited in this context relate to elections for political office; political parties; proposals to change legislation, regulations, public policy; or the decision to join or support a potential civic, community, fraternal, or labor organization.

This Act does not prohibit employers from communicating information that is required by law, and neither does it prohibit employers from hosting voluntary meetings on religious or political matters.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB 233.