



**Ben LaRocco**  
**Senior Director, Government Relations**

Tuesday March 25, 2025  
Senate Finance Committee - Bill Hearing on HB 1294

Good afternoon Chairwoman Beidle, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My Name is Ben LaRocco, and I'm the Senior Director of Government Relations for EarnIn, one of the largest providers of Earned Wage Access services, or EWA, in the country.

I'm speaking today in support of HB 1294, a Maryland specific regulatory framework for Earned Wage Access, or EWA, which you likely recall has been discussed here in Maryland for multiple sessions. While this Committee committed considerable time to this bill last year, we were unable to get a bill last session. We worked diligently post session to come to an agreement, and hope that this bill, which received the overwhelming support of the Democratic Caucus in the House, can receive positive consideration in the Senate.

In Maryland, more than 92,000 residents have used our earned wage access product, including more than 40,000 last year, an increase of nearly 9,000 since 2023. The top employers of our customers include Johns Hopkins Medical, Baltimore County Public Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Prince George's County Public Schools.

EarnIn is direct to consumer, which means anyone can use our services, though we also have partnerships with large employers, and own a payroll company, which processes payroll for hundreds of thousands of workers.

Nationally, last year about 2 million Americans used EarnIn to access their earnings on their own schedules.

Once you have worked and earned money, those funds are legally yours, but your employer gets to hold onto an individual's wages until payday because running payroll is complicated and expensive. This is why most employers pay biweekly or even monthly.

EarnIn provides customers with access to their earnings as they are earned, without mandatory fees, interest, or recourse.

Traditional financial services often don't serve low income families very well, relying on high fees to penalize workers when they most need help. With EWA, EarnIn takes on all the risk, so it aligns incentives between the provider and the user. We only succeed when our customers do. If they don't pay us back, we lose that money, so it is in our interest to offer a product that is responsibly used.



This bill regulates EWA as a loan, which was a major point of disagreement last year, it contains other consumer protections like a first in the nation limit on expediting fees, and strict regulations to ensure that tips are truly voluntary.

Other consumer protections that we support in this legislation are strict disclosures and transparency of operations, robust privacy protections (EarnIn does not monetize nor sell any data), and a prohibition on any interest, late fees, or recourse such as sending someone to collections or reporting a non payment to a credit bureau.

EarnIn is working every day to find better solutions for our customers. HB 1294 places meaningful guardrails on an existing product to better serve Maryland consumers with free and low-cost options, and ensures we can meet their needs in the future.

I encourage the Committee to pass HB 1294 without amendment, and ensure your constituents have access to this safe and effective product. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.