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NFIB-Maryland – 60 West St., Suite 101 – Annapolis, MD 21401 – [www.NFIB.com/Maryland](http://www.NFIB.com/Maryland)

TO: House Ways & Means Committee

FROM: NFIB – Maryland

DATE: February 24, 2025

RE: **OPPOSE HOUSE BILL 997** – Admissions and Amusement Tax – Food and Beverages

Founded in 1943, NFIB is the voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. With more than 250,000 members nationwide, and nearly 4,000 here in Maryland, we work to protect and promote the ability of our members to grow and operate their business.

On behalf of Maryland's small businesses, NFIB opposes House Bill 997 – legislation that, generally, would allow a county or local government to charge restaurants, bars, cafeterias, eateries, and more a gross receipts tax of up to 3% on the sale of food, alcoholic beverages, soda, bottled water, and candy.

This legislation will have an outsized and negative impact on small businesses in the jurisdictions that levy this tax. Administering the tax as prescribed in HB997 will introduce a new method of tax collection for many of these businesses, adding new complexities.

Given Maryland's unique geography and compact size, HB997 will put small businesses in such counties at a competitive disadvantage to their neighbors, not just over state lines, but now over county lines.

NFIB strongly supported legislation in 2020 ([SB223](#)/[HB185](#)) establishing a commission to evaluate the State's tax systems and make recommendations to ensure Maryland's tax policy is competitive with surrounding jurisdictions and encourages business growth and job creation.

We encourage the General Assembly to revisit the idea of such a commission before passing legislation like HB997 which creates more of a financial web small business owners must work through to ensure they remain competitive, financially viable, and do not run afoul of more tax collection requirements.

For these reasons, **NFIB opposes HJB997** and requests an unfavorable report.