

In reference to bill HB535 - FAV

Dear Steven J. Arentz,

My name is Essie Griffin, and I am a cottage food baker here in Cecil County, Maryland. I'm writing to urge you to consider increasing the sales cap for Maryland's cottage food businesses.

As it stands, the current gross sales limit of \$50,000 makes it nearly impossible for small home-based bakers like myself to grow or even make a modest living. Once taxes, ingredients, packaging, and other expenses are deducted, there's very little left to support ourselves — and yet, if we take on more orders, we risk violating the law.

This restriction has a real impact on families like mine. My husband recently lost his job unexpectedly, and I wanted to take on more bakery orders to help cover our bills. But I couldn't — because I would go over the cap. It's incredibly frustrating to be limited in my own success by outdated regulations that don't reflect the cost of living or the realities of running a small food business today.

I believe the government shouldn't be determining how much someone is "allowed" to earn from honest, home-based work — but at the very least, the cap should allow for a reasonable living wage. Cottage food businesses empower families, strengthen local economies, and foster entrepreneurship. I buy flour direct from a Maryland grower & mill so my business also supports Maryland's agriculture. Please consider

supporting legislation to raise or remove the sales cap so that Maryland's small producers can truly thrive!

Thank you for your time and for representing your constituents. I hope you'll stand with small business owners like me and help make this change.

Sincerely,
Essie Griffin
148 Katherine Court
Elkton, MD 21921