

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

Senate Bill 466  
Finance

(Senator Beidle)

Economic Matters

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Wage and Hour Law - Minor League Baseball Players - Exemption

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This bill exempts a minor league baseball player who is compensated in accordance with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement that expressly states the wages and working conditions of employees from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not substantively change State operations or finances. The Maryland Department of Labor does not recall receiving any Maryland Wage and Hour Law complaints from minor league baseball players.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The Maryland Wage and Hour Law is the State complement to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which specifies minimum wage and overtime requirements for employers and employees in the State. For a general overview of Maryland's Wage and Hour Law, please see the **Appendix – Maryland Wage and Hour Law**.

Under federal law, FLSA exempts any employee employed to play baseball who is compensated pursuant to a contract that provides for a weekly salary for services performed during the league's championship season (but not spring training or the off season) at a rate that is not less than a weekly salary equal to the federal minimum wage for a workweek of

40 hours, irrespective of the number of hours the employee devotes to baseball related activities.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 702 (Delegate Wilson) - Economic Matters.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 31, 2024  
rh/mcr Third Reader - February 23, 2024

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## **Appendix – Maryland Wage and Hour Law**

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The Maryland Wage and Hour Law is the State complement to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which specifies minimum wage and overtime requirements for employers and employees in the State. State law specifies that an employee must be paid the greater of the federal minimum wage (which is currently \$7.25 per hour) or \$15.00 per hour. However, an employer may pay 85% of the State minimum wage rate to employees younger than age 18.

The Maryland Wage and Hour Law and minimum wage requirements do not apply to certain categories of employees, including those defined as administrative, executive, or professional; certain seasonal employees; part-time employees younger than age 16; salesmen and those who work on commission; an employer's immediate family; drive-in theater employees; employees training in a special education program in a public school; employees of an establishment that sells food and drink for on-premises consumption and has an annual gross income of \$400,000 or less; employees employed by an employer who is engaged in canning, freezing, packing, or first processing of perishable or seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry, or seafood; certain farm workers; and covered employees under the Secure Maryland Wage Act.

Generally, the employer of a tipped employee is allowed a tip credit that can be applied against the direct wages paid by the employer. The employee can be paid tipping wages so long as the wages plus the tips received equal at least the minimum wage, the employee retains all tips, and the employee customarily receives more than \$30.00 a month in tips. The tip credit is equal to the State minimum wage, less \$3.63. Thus, the wage paid by employers to tipped employees is \$3.63, as long as their wages plus tips equal the minimum wage.

Under Maryland's Wage and Hour Law, an employer is required to pay an overtime wage of at least 1.5 times the usual hourly wage for each hour over 40 hours that an employee works during one work week. This requirement does not apply to an employer that is subject to federal rail laws; a nonprofit concert promoter, legitimate theater, music festival, music pavilion, or theatrical show; or specified amusement or recreational establishments. It also does not apply to an employee for whom the U.S. Secretary of Transportation sets qualifications and maximum hours of service under federal law; a mechanic, parts person, or salesperson, under certain conditions; a driver employed by a taxicab operator; or specified air carrier employees under certain conditions. Also, specific exemptions apply for farm work, bowling establishments, and infirmaries.

If an employer pays less than the wages required, the employee may bring an action against the employer to recover (1) the difference between the wage paid to the employee and the wage required; (2) an additional amount equal to the difference as liquidated damages; and (3) legal fees. The court must award these differences in wages, damages, and counsel fees if the court determines that an employee is entitled to recovery. However, if an employer shows to the satisfaction of the court that the employer acted in good faith and reasonably believed that the wages paid to the employee were not less than the required wages, then the court must award liquidated damages of an amount less than the difference in wages or no liquidated damages.

A person who violates the Maryland Wage and Hour Law is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.