

HOUSE BILL 724

D5, K3

6lr1196

By: **Delegate Lopez**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Employment Discrimination – Caregiver Status**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting employment discrimination based on an individual's
4 caregiver status; and generally relating to employment discrimination.

5 BY renumbering

6 Article – State Government
7 Section 20–601(b) through (k)
8 to be Section 20–601(c) through (l), respectively
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

12 Article – State Government
13 Section 20–601(a)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to

17 Article – State Government
18 Section 20–601(b)
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

22 Article – State Government
23 Section 20–601(i)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
26 (As enacted by Section 1 of this Act)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 20–602, 20–606, and 20–610(b) and (c)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That Section(s) 20–601(b) through (k) of Article – State Government of the Annotated Code
of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 20–601(c) through (l), respectively.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
as follows:

Article – State Government

20–601.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

**(B) “CAREGIVER STATUS” MEANS THE STATUS OF BEING AN INDIVIDUAL
WHO PROVIDES DIRECT AND ONGOING CARE FOR:**

(1) A MINOR CHILD; OR

(2) AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO:

**(I) RELIES ON THE CAREGIVER FOR MEDICAL CARE OR TO
MEET THE NEEDS OF DAILY LIFE; AND**

**(II) 1. IS IN A FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
CAREGIVER, INCLUDING:**

A. THE CAREGIVER’S CHILD;

B. THE CAREGIVER’S SPOUSE;

C. THE CAREGIVER’S DOMESTIC PARTNER;

D. THE CAREGIVER’S PARENT;

E. THE CAREGIVER’S SIBLING;

F. THE CAREGIVER’S GRANDCHILD;

G. THE CAREGIVER’S GRANDPARENT;

**H. THE CHILD OR PARENT OF THE CAREGIVER'S SPOUSE
OR DOMESTIC PARTNER; OR**

**I. ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL IN A FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP
RECOGNIZED BY THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS; OR**

2. RESIDES IN THE CAREGIVER'S HOUSEHOLD.

(i) "Harassment" includes:

(1) unwelcome and offensive conduct, which need not be severe or pervasive, when:

(i) the conduct is based on race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, age, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or military status; and

(ii) 1. submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment of an individual;

2. submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or

3. based on the totality of the circumstances, the conduct unreasonably creates a working environment that a reasonable person would perceive to be abusive or hostile; and

(2) sexual harassment.

20-602.

It is the policy of the State, in the exercise of its police power for the protection of the public safety, public health, and general welfare, for the maintenance of business and good government, and for the promotion of the State's trade, commerce, and manufacturers:

(1) to assure all persons equal opportunity in receiving employment and in all labor management-union relations, regardless of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, age, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment; and

(2) to that end, to prohibit discrimination in employment by any person.

20-606.

(a) An employer may not:

(1) fail or refuse to hire, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to the individual's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of:

(i) the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment; or

(ii) the individual's refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test;

(2) limit, segregate, or classify its employees or applicants for employment in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee because of:

(i) the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment; or

(ii) the individual's refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test;

(3) request or require genetic tests or genetic information as a condition of hiring or determining benefits;

(4) fail or refuse to make a reasonable accommodation for the known disability of an otherwise qualified employee or an applicant for employment; or

(5) engage in harassment of an employee.

(b) An employment agency may not:

(1) fail or refuse to refer for employment or otherwise discriminate against any individual because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment; or

(2) classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment.

(c) A labor organization may not:

(1) exclude or expel from its membership, or otherwise discriminate against, any individual because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment;

(2) limit, segregate, or classify its membership, or classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive the individual of employment opportunities, limit the individual's employment opportunities, or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee or as an applicant for employment because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment; or

(3) cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

(d) An employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining programs, including on-the-job training programs, may not discriminate against any individual in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training or retraining because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, an employer, labor organization, or employment agency may not print or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment by the employer, membership in or any classification or referral for employment by the labor organization, or any classification or referral for employment by the employment agency that indicates any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or military status.

(2) A notice or advertisement may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, disability, or military status if religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, disability, or military status is a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.

(f) An employer may not discriminate or retaliate against any of its employees or applicants for employment, an employment agency may not discriminate against any individual, and a labor organization may not discriminate or retaliate against any member or applicant for membership because the individual has:

(1) opposed any practice prohibited by this subtitle; or

(2) made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this subtitle.

20–610.

(b) An employer may not:

(1) fail or refuse to offer an internship, terminate an internship, or otherwise discriminate against an individual with respect to the terms, conditions, or privileges of an internship because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the internship;

(2) limit, segregate, or classify its interns or applicants for internships in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of internship opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an intern because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the internship;

(3) fail or refuse to make a reasonable accommodation for the known disability of an otherwise qualified intern; or

(4) discriminate or retaliate against any of its interns or applicants for internships because the individual has:

(i) opposed any practice prohibited by this subtitle; or

(ii) made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, a proceeding, or a hearing under this subtitle.

(c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, an employer may not print or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to an internship with the employer that indicates any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or military status.

(2) A notice or an advertisement may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status,

1 **CAREGIVER STATUS**, disability, or military status if religion, sex, age, national origin,
2 marital status, **CAREGIVER STATUS**, disability, or military status is a bona fide
3 occupational qualification for the internship.

4 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
5 October 1, 2026.