HOUSE BILL 1479

K3, P4, L6   6lr3624

By: **Delegates Boafo, Charkoudian, Amprey, Bhandari, Fennell, A. Johnson, Kaiser, Lehman, Terrasa, Turner, and White Holland**
Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2026
Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Labor and Employment – Minimum Wage – Increase**
3 **(Maryland Raise the Wage Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of increasing the State minimum wage rate to a certain amount for certain
5   employers for certain calendar years; increasing, except under certain
6   circumstances, the State minimum wage rate in effect for certain periods of time
7   based on annual growth in a certain consumer price index, as determined by the
8   Commissioner of Labor and Industry; and generally relating to the payment of
9   wages.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11   Article – Labor and Employment
12   Section 3–413
13   Annotated Code of Maryland
14   (2025 Replacement Volume)

15   SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Labor and Employment

18 3–413.

19   (a)   (1)   In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20   (2)   **"CONSUMER PRICE INDEX" MEANS THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX**
21 **FOR ALL URBAN CONSUMERS FOR THE WASHINGTON–ARLINGTON–ALEXANDRIA,**
22 **DC–VA–MD–WV METROPOLITAN AREA OR A SUCCESSOR METROPOLITAN AREA**
23 **INDEX PUBLISHED BY THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS.**

1   **(3)**   "Employer" includes a governmental unit.

2   **[**(3)**] (4)**   "Small employer" means an employer that employs **[**14**] 49** or
3   fewer employees.

4   (b)   Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section and § 3–414 of this subtitle,
5   each employer shall pay:

6   (1)   to each employee who is subject to both the federal Act and this subtitle,
7   at least the greater of:

8   (i)   the minimum wage for that employee under the federal Act; or

9   (ii)   the State minimum wage set under subsection (c) of this section;
10   and

11   (2)   to each other employee who is subject to this subtitle, at least the
12   greater of:

13   (i)   the highest minimum wage under the federal Act; or

14   (ii)   the State minimum wage set under subsection (c) of this section.

15   (c)   (1)   Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the State
16   minimum wage rate is:

17   (i)   **[**for the 12–month period beginning January 1, 2023, $13.25 per
18   hour; and

19   (ii)**]   FOR THE 48–MONTH PERIOD** beginning January 1, 2024,
20   $15.00 per hour**;**

21   **(II)   FOR THE 12–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2028,**
22   **$18.00 PER HOUR; AND**

23   **(III)   FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT 12–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING**
24   **JANUARY 1, 2029, AND EACH JANUARY 1 THEREAFTER, THE RATE DETERMINED BY**
25   **THE COMMISSIONER UNDER PARAGRAPH (3)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION**.

26   (2)   The State minimum wage rate for a small employer is:

27   (i)   **[**for the 12–month period beginning January 1, 2023, $12.80 per
28   hour; and

1   (ii)   beginning] **FOR THE 60–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING** January
2 1, 2024, $15.00 per hour**;**

3   **(II)   FOR THE 12–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2029,**
4 **$18.00 PER HOUR; AND**

5   **(III)   FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT 12–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING**
6 **JANUARY 1, 2030, AND EACH JANUARY 1 THEREAFTER, THE RATE DETERMINED BY**
7 **THE COMMISSIONER UNDER PARAGRAPH (3)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**

8   **(3)   (I)   EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (III) OF THIS**
9 **PARAGRAPH AND SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (IV) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE**
10 **STATE MINIMUM WAGE RATE SHALL BE INCREASED BY THE AMOUNT, ROUNDED TO**
11 **THE NEAREST 5 CENTS, THAT EQUALS THE PRODUCT OF:**

12   **1.   A.   FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE WAGE**
13 **RATE IN EFFECT UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(III) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE STATE**
14 **MINIMUM WAGE RATE IN EFFECT FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12–MONTH**
15 **PERIOD UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION; OR**

16   **B.   FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE WAGE RATE**
17 **IN EFFECT UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(III) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE STATE MINIMUM**
18 **WAGE RATE IN EFFECT FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12–MONTH PERIOD**
19 **UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION; AND**

20   **2.   THE AVERAGE PERCENT GROWTH IN THE CONSUMER**
21 **PRICE INDEX FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12–MONTH PERIOD, AS**
22 **DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSIONER UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (II)1 OF THIS**
23 **PARAGRAPH.**

24   **(II)   1.   SUBJECT TO SUBSUBPARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS**
25 **SUBPARAGRAPH, EACH SEPTEMBER 1, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL DETERMINE AND**
26 **ANNOUNCE:**

27   **A.   THE AVERAGE PERCENT GROWTH, IF ANY, IN THE**
28 **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX BASED ON THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12–MONTH**
29 **PERIOD FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE ON MAY 1; AND**

30   **B.   THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE RATE THAT WILL BE**
31 **EFFECTIVE FOR THE 12–MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING THE FOLLOWING JANUARY 1.**

1   **2.   THE   COMMISSIONER   SHALL   MAKE   THE**
2   **ANNOUNCEMENT   REQUIRED   UNDER   SUBSUBPARAGRAPH   1   OF   THIS**
3   **SUBPARAGRAPH:**

4   **A.   FOR THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE RATE THAT WILL BE**
5   **IN   EFFECT   UNDER   PARAGRAPH   (1)(III)   OF   THIS   SUBSECTION,   BEGINNING**
6   **SEPTEMBER 1, 2028; AND**

7   **B.   FOR THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE RATE THAT WILL BE**
8   **IN   EFFECT   UNDER   PARAGRAPH   (2)(III)   OF   THIS   SUBSECTION,   BEGINNING**
9   **SEPTEMBER 1, 2029.**

10   **(III)   IF THE COMMISSIONER DETERMINES THAT THERE IS A**
11   **DECLINE OR NO GROWTH IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, THE STATE MINIMUM**
12   **WAGE RATE SHALL REMAIN THE SAME AS THE RATE THAT WAS IN EFFECT FOR THE**
13   **IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12–MONTH PERIOD.**

14   **(IV)   1.   AN   INCREASE   IN   THE   MINIMUM   WAGE   RATE**
15   **DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSIONER UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH MAY NOT EXCEED**
16   **5% OF THE MINIMUM WAGE RATE IN EFFECT FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING**
17   **12–MONTH PERIOD.**

18   **2.   THE   COMMISSIONER   MAY   NOT   TEMPORARILY**
19   **SUSPEND AN INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM WAGE RATE REQUIRED UNDER THIS**
20   **SECTION FOR ANY REASON.**

21   (d)   An employer may pay an employee a wage that equals a rate of 85% of the
22   State minimum wage established under this section if the employee is under the age of 18
23   years.

24   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
25   October 1, 2026.