

# SENATE BILL 831

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By: Senator Ferguson

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Labor Law – Child Labor Penalties, Private Sector Employee Labor Relations,**  
3 **and State Employee Labor Standards**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing certain civil penalties for violations of law involving the  
5 employment of minors; prohibiting employers in the State from allowing the  
6 formation of a certain organization or entity that is expressly exempt from or not  
7 subject to the federal National Labor Relations Act or the jurisdiction of the National  
8 Labor Relations Board; authorizing certain private employees to petition the Public  
9 Employee Relations Board to resolve certain matters under certain circumstances;  
10 authorizing the Public Employee Relations Board to resolve the petitions of private  
11 employees in a certain manner; prohibiting a unit of State government in the  
12 Executive Branch from applying to the federal government for a waiver of any  
13 applicable provision of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act; and generally relating  
14 to labor protections for minors, private employees, and State employees.

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
16 Article – Labor and Employment  
17 Section 3–213 and 3–216  
18 Annotated Code of Maryland  
19 (2025 Replacement Volume)

20 BY adding to  
21 Article – Labor and Employment  
22 Section 3–217 and 4–406  
23 Annotated Code of Maryland  
24 (2025 Replacement Volume)

25 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
26 Article – State Government  
27 Section 22–101  
28 Annotated Code of Maryland

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

2 BY adding to  
3 Article – State Government  
4 Section 22–2A–01 through 22–2A–04 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 2A.  
5 Private Employees”  
6 Annotated Code of Maryland  
7 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
9 Article – State Personnel and Pensions  
10 Section 2–201  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Labor and Employment**

16 3–213.

17 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, a minor may not be employed or  
18 allowed to work:

19 (1) in, about, or in connection with the manufacturing of a hazardous  
20 substance;

21 (2) in, about, or in connection with:

22 (i) a blast furnace;

23 (ii) a distillery where an alcoholic beverage is manufactured, bottled,  
24 wrapped, or packed;

25 (iii) a railroad;

26 (iv) an engineer, firefighter, or pilot on a vessel that is engaged in  
27 commerce; or

28 (v) a dock or wharf other than a marina where pleasure vessels are  
29 sold or served; or

30 (3) in, about, or in connection with:

31 (i) the erection or repair of an electrical wire;

- (ii) the cleaning, oiling, or wiping of machinery; or
- (iii) an occupation that is prohibited by law.

- (1) during the school hours set for that minor;
- (2) about or in connection with an acid, dye, gas, lye, or paint;
- (3) at, about, or in connection with:
  - (i) an airport;
  - (ii) a brickyard;
  - (iii) a lumberyard;
  - (iv) a workroom or work site where goods are manu-
  - (v) scaffolding; or
  - (vi) a vessel when engaged in navigation or commerce; or

(4) in, about, or in connection with:

- (i) construction;
- (ii) an occupation that causes dust in an injurious quantity;
- (iii) a manufacturing occupation;
- (iv) a mechanical occupation;
- (v) a processing occupation; or

(vi) the adjustment, cleaning, or operation of power-driven

1. an office machine; or

2. machinery used in a school or government institution as  
g.

26 (c) The Commissioner may prohibit minors being employed in an occupation if:

6 (3) after investigation, the Commissioner determines that the occupation  
7 is injurious to:

8 (i) the health or welfare of minors; or

9 (ii) the morals of minors under the age of 16 years.

10 3-216.

11 (a) A person may not:

12 (1) interfere with or hinder the performance of any duty of the  
13 Commissioner under this subtitle; or

14 (2) knowingly give false information to the Commissioner.

15 (b) A person may not knowingly:

16 (1) employ a minor in violation of a provision of this subtitle; or

17 (2) allow a minor to be employed in violation of a provision of this subtitle.

18 (c) (1) A person who violates any provision of subsection (a) of this section is  
19 guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or  
20 imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or both.

(2) A person who violates any provision of subsection (b) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or both.

24 3-217.

25 (A) THE COMMISSIONER MAY ASSESS A CIVIL PENALTY AGAINST A PERSON  
26 WHO:

27 (1) VIOLATES § 3-216(A) OR (B) OF THIS SUBTITLE; OR

(2) WILLFULLY OR REPEATEDLY EMPLOYS A MINOR IN VIOLATION OF  
§ 3-213 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

6 (I) BEFORE JULY 15, 2027, \$16,035 FOR EACH VIOLATION; OR

7 (II) BEGINNING JULY 15, 2027, THE AMOUNT SET BY THE  
8 COMMISSIONER UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION FOR EACH VIOLATION.

11 (I) BEFORE JULY 15, 2027, \$72,876 FOR EACH VIOLATION; OR

12 (II) BEGINNING JULY 15, 2027, THE AMOUNT SET BY THE  
13 COMMISSIONER UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION FOR EACH VIOLATION.

14 (c) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, BEGINNING  
15 JANUARY 1, 2027, AND EACH CALENDAR YEAR THEREAFTER, THE COMMISSIONER  
16 SHALL INCREASE THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES IN EFFECT UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF  
17 THIS SECTION BY INCREASING EACH CIVIL PENALTY AMOUNT BY THE PERCENTAGE  
18 INCREASE, IF ANY, IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR ALL URBAN CONSUMERS  
19 OR A SUCCESSOR INDEX PUBLISHED BY THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF LABOR  
20 STATISTICS AS NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH FEDERAL LAW.

(2) THE ADJUSTMENT UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION  
SHALL BE EFFECTIVE JULY 15 EACH YEAR.

23 (D) A CIVIL PENALTY UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE PAID INTO THE  
24 GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.

25 4-406.

26 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
27 INDICATED.

28 (2) "FEDERAL ACT" MEANS THE FEDERAL NATIONAL LABOR  
29 RELATIONS ACT.

(3) "LABOR ORGANIZATION" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 152 OF THE FEDERAL ACT.

5 (B) AN EMPLOYER IN THE STATE MAY NOT ALLOW THE FORMATION OF AN  
6 ORGANIZATION OR ENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE:

15 (3) THAT MAY BE DISSOLVED UNILATERALLY BY THE EMPLOYER; AND

19 (I) THE FEDERAL ACT; OR

20 (II) THE JURISDICTION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS  
21 BOARD.

**22 (c) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO PRECLUDE:**

26 (2) CERTIFICATION AS AN EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE UNDER THE  
27 FEDERAL ACT.

## **Article – State Government**

29 22-101.

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

- (b) "Board" means the Public Employee Relations Board.
- (c) Unless specifically provided otherwise, "day" means a calendar day.
- (d) "Employee organization" means:
  - (1) a labor organization in which public employees participate and that has one of its primary purposes representing public employees; **OR**
  - (2) **FOR PURPOSES OF SUBTITLE 2A OF THIS TITLE, A LABOR ORGANIZATION IN WHICH PRIVATE EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE AND THAT HAS AS ONE OF ITS PRIMARY PURPOSES REPRESENTING PRIVATE EMPLOYEES.**
- (e) "Exclusive representative" means an employee organization that has been certified by the Board as an exclusive representative **FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES** under subtitle 4 of this title **OR FOR PRIVATE EMPLOYEES UNDER SUBTITLE 2A OF THIS TITLE.**
- (f) "Interested employee organization" means:
  - (1) an employee organization already representing employees in a bargaining unit; or
  - (2) a petitioner who has met the showing of interest requirement under § 2 of this title.
- (g) "Lockout" means action taken by a public employer to:
  - (1) interrupt or prevent the continuity of the employees' usual work for the purpose and with the intent of coercing the employees into relinquishing rights guaranteed by this title; or
  - (2) bring economic pressure on employees for the purpose of securing the replacement of their executive representative to collective bargaining agreement terms.
- (h) **"PRIVATE EMPLOYEE" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:**
  - (1) **IS SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT;**
  - (2) **WOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT AS IT EXISTED ON JANUARY 1, 2025.**

1           **(I)**    “Public employee” means an individual who holds a position by appointment  
2 or employment in the service of a public employer with collective bargaining rights under  
3 Title 3 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article or Title 6, Subtitle 4 or 5 or Title 16,  
4 Subtitle 7 of the Education Article.

5           **[(i)] (J)**    “Public employer” means:

6                   (1)    the State, including any unit, department, or instrumentality of the  
7 State;

8                   (2)    a community college listed under § 16–702(b) of the Education Article;  
9 and

10                  (3)    a county board of education or the Baltimore City Board of School  
11 Commissioners.

12           **[(j)] (K)**    (1)    “Showing of interest form” means a written statement from a  
13 public employee who wishes to be represented by a petitioning employee organization for  
14 the purpose of collective bargaining.

15                  (2)    “Showing of interest form” includes:

16                   (i)    a union authorization card; or

17                   (ii)   a union membership card.

18           **[(k)] (L)**    (1)    “Strike” means any concerted action to impede the full and  
19 proper performance of employment duties in order to induce, influence, coerce, or enforce  
20 demands for a change in wages, hours, terms, or other conditions of employment.

21                  (2)    “Strike” includes a total or partial:

22                   (i)    refusal or failure to report to work;

23                   (ii)   refusal or failure to perform employment duties;

24                   (iii)   withdrawal from work;

25                   (iv)   work stoppage; or

26                   (v)    work slowdown.

27                   **SUBTITLE 2A. PRIVATE EMPLOYEES.**

28                   **22–2A–01.**

1       (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
2 INDICATED.

3       (B) "CHARGING PARTY" MEANS THE PARTY ALLEGING THAT AN UNFAIR  
4 LABOR PRACTICE HAS OCCURRED.

5       (C) "FEDERAL ACT" MEANS THE FEDERAL NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS  
6 ACT.

7       (D) "NLRB" MEANS THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD.

8       (E) "RESPONDENT" MEANS THE PARTY THAT ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED AN  
9 UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE.

10      **22-2A-02.**

11      **THIS SUBTITLE:**

12       (1) APPLIES ONLY TO PRIVATE EMPLOYEES AND THE EMPLOYERS OF  
13 PRIVATE EMPLOYEES; AND

14       (2) MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO AFFECT THE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE  
15 EMPLOYEES UNDER ANY OTHER FEDERAL OR STATE LAW.

16      **22-2A-03.**

17       (A) (1) THIS SUBTITLE SHALL BE CONSTRUED LIBERALLY TO ENSURE  
18 THAT ALL PRIVATE EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE CAN EFFECTIVELY EXERCISE THE  
19 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO FULL FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, SELF-ORGANIZATION,  
20 AND DESIGNATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING, FREE FROM  
21 RETALIATION OR INTIMIDATION BY THEIR EMPLOYERS.

22       (2) PRIVATE EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE HAVE THE RIGHT:

23       (I) TO ENGAGE IN COLLECTIVE ACTION AND TO ORGANIZE,  
24 FORM, JOIN, OR ASSIST EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS; AND

25       (II) WHEN PRIVATE EMPLOYEES CHOOSE TO DO SO  
26 COLLECTIVELY THROUGH SELECTED OR DESIGNATED BARGAINING  
27 REPRESENTATIVES, TO ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE AND EXPEDITIOUS COLLECTIVE  
28 BARGAINING THAT RESULTS IN A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT  
29 ADDRESSING THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEES' TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

6 (B) A PRIVATE EMPLOYEE MAY PETITION THE BOARD TO PROTECT AND  
7 ENFORCE THE RIGHTS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2) OF THIS SECTION IF:

8 (1) THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEE:

9 (I) IS EMPLOYED IN A POSITION THAT LOSES COVERAGE UNDER  
10 THE FEDERAL ACT BECAUSE THE FEDERAL ACT IS REPEALED OR NARROWED OR  
11 ITS ENFORCEMENT IS ENJOINED IN A CASE INVOLVING THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEE;  
12 AND

17 (C) (1) THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY WITH RESPECT TO CASES THAT:

**18 (I) WERE PENDING BEFORE THE NLRB AS OF JUNE 1, 2026; OR**

19 (II) ARE FILED WITH THE NLRB ON OR AFTER JUNE 1, 2026.

20 (2) THE NLRB SHALL BE DEEMED TO HAVE CEDED JURISDICTION TO  
21 THE STATES IF:

22 (I) FOR CASES WHERE A CERTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS OF  
23 AN ELECTION, INCLUDING A CERTIFICATION OF A REPRESENTATIVE, IS IN DISPUTE,  
24 A REGIONAL DIRECTOR OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE HAS ISSUED A  
25 DECISION, OR WHERE CHALLENGES OR OBJECTIONS TO A REPRESENTATIVE  
26 ELECTION ARE PENDING BEFORE THE NLRB, THE NLRB:

## 27 1. LACKS A QUORUM;

5 (II) FOR CASES WHERE NO CERTIFICATION, COMPLAINT, OR  
6 DECISION HAS BEEN ISSUED, WHEN THERE IS A PROCESSING DELAY THAT RESULTS  
7 IN THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEE'S CASE REMAINING PENDING:

## 1. ACCEPT OR DECLINE REVIEW: OR

26 (D) IF THE BOARD DETERMINES THAT ANY OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER  
27 SUBSECTION (C)(2) OF THIS SECTION NO LONGER APPLY, THE BOARD SHALL RETAIN  
28 JURISDICTION OVER PENDING MATTERS UNLESS ORDERED BY A COURT OF  
29 COMPETENT JURISDICTION TO CEDE JURISDICTION TO THE FEDERAL  
30 GOVERNMENT

31                   (E)    (1)    A PRIVATE EMPLOYEE MAY PETITION THE BOARD UNDER THIS  
32 SECTION TO:

33 (D) PROCESS ANY REPRESENTATION PETITION PREVIOUSLY

1 FILED WITH THE NLRB;

2 (II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION,  
3 PROMPTLY CERTIFY AN EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION AS AN EXCLUSIVE  
4 REPRESENTATIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (G)(1)(II)1 OF THIS SECTION;  
5 OR

6 (III) DECIDE AN UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE CASE ARISING UNDER  
7 THE FEDERAL ACT.

8 (2) ANY EXISTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT  
9 NEGOTIATED BETWEEN A CERTIFIED EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE AND AN  
10 EMPLOYER SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT DURING THE BARGAINING  
11 FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION.

12 (F) (1) TO PURSUE RELIEF FROM THE BOARD UNDER THIS SECTION, A  
13 PRIVATE EMPLOYEE OR THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEE'S REPRESENTATIVE SHALL FILE  
14 WITH THE BOARD:

15 (I) THE CHARGING PARTY'S NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS,  
16 AND TELEPHONE NUMBER;

17 (II) THE RESPONDENT'S NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS,  
18 AND TELEPHONE NUMBER;

19 (III) WHERE APPLICABLE, THE ORIGINAL CHARGE OR PETITION  
20 FILED WITH THE NLRB ALONG WITH ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND  
21 EVIDENCE THAT WAS SUBMITTED TO THE NLRB; AND

22 (IV) ALL CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS, OR OTHER  
23 COVERED MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE CHARGING PARTY, OR OTHERWISE IN THE  
24 CHARGING PARTY'S POSSESSION, FROM THE NLRB REGARDING THE ORIGINAL  
25 CHARGE OR PETITION FILED WITH THE NLRB.

26 (2) THE DOCUMENTATION AND EVIDENCE FILED WITH THE BOARD  
27 UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE SERVED ON THE  
28 RESPONDENT.

29 (3) THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND EVIDENCE SUBMITTED  
30 TO THE BOARD UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE MAINTAINED  
31 CONFIDENTIALLY AS PART OF THE BOARD'S INVESTIGATORY FILE AND IS NOT  
32 SUBJECT TO PUBLIC INSPECTION UNDER THE PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT.

**(G) (1) TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION, THE BOARD MAY:**

(I) CONDUCT ELECTIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER A  
ORITY OF PRIVATE EMPLOYEES IN AN APPROPRIATE BARGAINING UNIT HAVE  
CTED AN EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE FOR PURPOSES OF COLLECTIVE  
AINING;

**(II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION:**

1. PROMPTLY CERTIFY AN EXCLUSIVE BARGAINING DETERMINING WHETHER A MAJORITY OF PRIVATE APPROPRIATE BARGAINING UNIT HAVE SELECTED AN EXCLUSIVE PURPOSES OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING; AND

2. ORDER THAT AN EMPLOYER BARGAIN WITH THAT  
G REPRESENTATIVE;

**(III) ORDER THAT AN EMPLOYER BARGAIN WITH AN EXCLUSIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE AND OTHERWISE DECIDE UNFAIR LABOR**

(IV) ORDER THAT AN EMPLOYER SUBMIT TO BINDING  
ASSIST THE PARTIES IN FINALIZING NEGOTIATIONS FOR A  
GAINING AGREEMENT IF:

1. THE NLRB OR THE BOARD HAS CERTIFIED AN  
G REPRESENTATIVE: OR

2. AN EMPLOYER HAS VOLUNTARILY RECOGNIZED THE  
G REPRESENTATIVE OF A GROUP OF PRIVATE EMPLOYEES  
THS HAVE PASSED WITHOUT THE PARTIES AGREEING ON AND  
IVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT:

(V) ORDER ANY APPROPRIATE REMEDY, INCLUDING  
RELIEF AND CIVIL PENALTIES UNDER § 22-2A-04(A) OF THIS  
SECTION, NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THIS SECTION, INCLUDING IF AN EMPLOYER  
SHOULD FAIL TO COMPLY WITH AN ORDER UNDER THIS SECTION; OR

**(VI) OTHERWISE DECIDE ALLEGATIONS OF UNFAIR LABOR**

(2) (i) SELECTION OF AN EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE FOR OF PARAGRAPH (1)(ii)1 OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY BE DEMONSTRATED

## 1 THROUGH:

1. A PREVIOUS CERTIFICATION BY ANOTHER STATE OR
2. AN ELECTION;
3. A WRITTEN DESIGNATION; OR
4. ANOTHER PROCESS RECOGNIZED BY THE BOARD OR  
E THE SELECTION IS MADE.

12 (H) TO RESOLVE A MATTER BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD UNDER THIS  
13 SECTION, THE BOARD:

19 22-2A-04.

20           (A) IF THE BOARD FINDS THAT AN EMPLOYER COMMITTED AN UNFAIR  
21 LABOR PRACTICE UNDER THE FEDERAL ACT, THE BOARD MAY ASSESS A CIVIL  
22 PENALTY NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 FOR EACH PRIVATE EMPLOYEE WITH RESPECT TO  
23 WHOM THE VIOLATION OCCURRED.

24 (B) CIVIL PENALTIES ASSESSED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION  
25 SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO A SPECIAL FUND TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE BOARD TO  
26 CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

27 (C) AN ORDER BY THE BOARD UNDER THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO  
28 JUDICIAL REVIEW BY THE CIRCUIT COURT ON PETITION OF ANY PARTY TO THE  
29 BOARD'S DECISION.

1 2-201.

2       **(A)** Except as otherwise provided by law, an employee in the Judicial, Legislative,  
3 or Executive Branch of State government is governed by the laws and personnel policies  
4 and procedures applicable in that branch.

5       **(B) A UNIT IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF STATE GOVERNMENT MAY NOT**  
6 **PETITION OR APPLY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR A WAIVER OF ANY**  
7 **PROVISION OF THE FEDERAL FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT THAT IS APPLICABLE TO**  
8 **THE UNIT, EVEN IF THE WAIVER IS OTHERWISE AUTHORIZED UNDER FEDERAL LAW.**

9       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
10 1, 2026.