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HB 1021 - Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Seasonal Temporary Workers
House Economic Matters Committee
February 25, 2019

OPPOSE

Donna S. Edwards
President
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Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1021 - Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Seasonal Temporary Workers. My name is Donna Edwards, President of the Maryland State and DC, AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

HB 1021 is another attempt to weaken protections for workers and to dilute Earned Sick Leave for working Marylanders. Under current law, seasonal workers are exempt from the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act if they work 106 days – a compromise from the original 90 days – or less at a seasonal job. HB 1021 increases that window from 106 days to 120 days, thereby exempting even more workers from receiving their Earned Sick Leave.

The Maryland Healthy Working Families Act was debated for six years. All stakeholders were at the table, including businesses that hired seasonal workers. Through vigorous negotiations, over multiple years, seasonal workers were carved out with the 106 day window, to ensure that business concerns were heard. Considering the number of attacks on the MHWA, and attempts to dilute this law after its full negotiation and passage, we are encouraged to talk with lawmakers to explore the option of submitting a bill that will decrease the window to 30 days, in order to provide more workers with Earned Sick Leave. A productive discussion could be had as to why this carve out even exists, in the first place.

For the protection and health of Maryland workers, we urge an unfavorable report.