



## SEIU MARYLAND & DC STATE COUNCIL

### Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 1123

*Labor & Employment – Maryland Wage & Hour Law – Agricultural Stands*

**House Economic Matters Committee**

**March 3, 2020, 1:00 PM**

Submitted by Terrence Cavanagh, Executive Director

Service Employees International Union, Maryland & DC State Council, urges you to oppose HB 1123, which would take away scheduled pay increases for low-wage workers.

With over two million members, the SEIU is the largest union in North America. We are focused on uniting workers in the sectors health care, public services, and property services to improve lives and the services we provide. We represent over 45,000 workers in Maryland and Washington, DC. SEIU has been the leading supporter of the **Fight for Fifteen** campaign in Maryland and across the country.

We have a number of objections to this legislation:

- It would chip away at the progress made under the *Fight for Fifteen* legislation that was long debated and delayed;
- It could undermine the wage floor in areas where farm stands are significant employers;
- The workforce this bill targets are already the subject of several exemptions or delays in getting to \$15 per hour, such as the smaller employer delay, or the family member exemption;
- The employers who would profit from this legislation have not demonstrated a hardship. Assuming this affects primarily seasonal farms stands, and the minimum wage did not increase until January 1 of this year, how have they demonstrated their hardship?
- If you allow this exemption, why not others? Why would the floodgates not open to any business, whether they can demonstrate grievous injury or not, from saying to you that they want or need an exemption?
- Who are these employers? Who are these workers that they should be exempt from e protections of our laws? Who has said “without an exemption I will be forced to close down”?

We ask you to give a unfavorable report to HB 1123.

Thank you.

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