



Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU
HB 1123– Labor and Employment - Maryland Wage and Hour Law - Agricultural Stands
Position: UNFAVORABLE

Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East (1199SEIU) is the largest healthcare union in the country with, with over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida and Washington, D.C. **We strongly oppose ANY efforts to exempt additional workers from the Maryland Minimum wage. We believe further exempting any workers hurts working families, businesses and the economy.**

Every day, the members of 1199SEIU save lives, deliver babies and care for the sick, seniors and people with disabilities. We are nurses, nurse aides, techs, lab workers, clerks, housekeepers, dietary workers, transporters, pharmacists, social workers and many other types of medical professionals. Many of our members worked hard to advocate for the passage of the \$15 minimum wage legislation.

We are very disappointed to see efforts to exclude farm-stand workers from the minimum wage because these workers deserve to be able to support themselves and their families. Also, we believe many of these workers are already exempt under current law:

Current Exclusions from Maryland Wage and Hour Law

§ 3-403:

- Under 16 and employed no more than 20 hours a week
- Child, parent, spouse, or other family member of the immediate family of the employer;
- Canning, freezing, packing or first processing of seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, horticultural commodities, poultry or seafood;
- Individuals working in agriculture if, during each quarter of the preceding calendar year, the employer used no more than 500 agricultural-worker days;

Maryland already excludes a large number of workers from its minimum wage, who are left behind and then forced to rely on social safety net services that WE ALL shoulder the burden for as a result.

We must do right by Maryland working families.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue an UNFAVORABLE report for House Bill 1123.