

February 6, 2020

**Senate Bill 62**

**Labor and Employment - Secure Maryland Wage Act**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Senate Bill 62 will take an important step to improve the safety and security of critical transportation hubs by ensuring the attraction and retention of experienced and trained workers.

Recent reports show that wealth is growing at the top of our income scale while people doing many of the toughest jobs in our county cannot afford rent, childcare, or health insurance. President Trump told Americans that cutting the corporate tax rate would give employers the windfall they needed to take care of their workers, but that has not happened.

This Bill requires an employer to pay specified wages and benefits to a covered employee beginning January 1, 2021. A covered employee is a nonexempt employee under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) who performs work at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), Pennsylvania Station in Baltimore (Penn Station), or the Port of Baltimore.

BWI Marshall Airport is an economic engine for Anne Arundel County and all of Maryland. Many county residents have careers at the airport, and currently, the low wages at these facilities leads to employee turnover. This means the staff does not have time to be trained and retrained, to gain experience in how to respond to emergency situations or to build the sense of normalcy at their worksites that is required to allow them to detect potential security incidents.

Higher wages at “heightened security locations” are not new and have been applied at LAX, Oakland Airport, the Port of Oakland, EWR, JFK, and LGA, for example. In our region, Dulles Airport and DCA have adopted a wage policy because they concluded it would improve safety and security.

This Bill represents an opportunity to improve security, while also securing higher pay for valued local workers. A practical liveable income is important to the citizens of Anne Arundel County and helps to attract and retain good employees. Notably, another local anchor institution, Anne Arundel Medical Center, recently announced that they will be raising their minimum wage to \$15.

The Secure Maryland Wage Act will help make many lives stable and help support making Anne Arundel County *The Best Place - For All*. **For those reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 62.**