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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Mary Beth Carozza
Senate Bill 404 Labor and Employment –
Maryland Healthy Workers Families Act – Verification
Senate Finance Committee Hearing
February 20, 2020**

Thank you, Chair Kelley and Vice Chair Feldman and members of the Senate Finance Committee for this opportunity to present and request your support for Senate Bill 404, which is a simple bill that allows employers to require verification of the appropriate use of paid sick leave by seasonal employees during the 107th-120th day of employment.

Like the agricultural exemption to the minimum wage bill that you just heard, Senate Bill 404 is also a result of our work together on the bipartisan Senate Small Business Workgroup. During our meetings, I consistently shared the continued request of seasonal employers to extend the current seasonal exemption of the paid sick leave law from 106 to 120 days to reflect the true timeframe of the season to include the shoulder season and the time needed to train workers before the season starts.

Last year, this Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on my bill, Senate Bill 681, which would have increased the period of time from 106 days to 120 days of employment before seasonal workers could use earned sick and safe leave. It did not move forward.

In the absence of legislative approval of the 120 day seasonal exemption, I have been working with the members of the Senate Small Business Workgroup on other legislative options to provide some relief to our seasonal employers during their busiest times of the year when they are often short staffed during peak weekends.

One of the options to provide relief to our seasonal employers has resulted in the introduction of this bill, Senate Bill 404. This legislation would authorize a seasonal employer to require verification that earned sick and safe leave is used appropriately by an employee when the leave is used during the period between the first 107 and 120 calendar days if the employer provided written notice about the verification requirement at the time the employee was hired. An employer may deny an employee's request to take earned sick and safe leave during that period if an employee fails or refused to provide any verification required by the employer that the leave was used appropriately.

Chair Kelley and members of the Finance Committee, I personally can attest that our seasonal small business operators need this relief as I am a product of growing up in a family-owned seasonal business, Beefy's, the first fast-food, drive-through restaurant in Ocean City. My parents gave hundreds of young people their first summer job and it's where I learned my work

ethic. Our seasonal small business operators of today want to continue to hire young people and this bill would allow businesses to keep employees on the payroll longer.

I want to thank all the local seasonal operators who have been sharing information and working with us on the impact of the paid sick leave law on their businesses and hiring practices. It is worth noting that SB 404 has the strong support of the Maryland Restaurant Association, the Ocean City and Salisbury Chambers of Commerce, the Ocean City Hotel-Motel Restaurant Association, the National Federation of Independent Business and the Maryland Department of Labor.

I am proud of our work together on the bipartisan Senate Small Business Workgroup in recognizing that our job creators need relief. Senate Bill 404 is a targeted bill that simply allows seasonal employers to require verification of the appropriate use of sick leave used by an employee between 107 and 120 days of employment. It will be a helpful tool to seasonal employers and will help ensure the appropriate use of paid sick leave used by seasonal employees.

This is an important priority for Maryland's seasonal employers, and I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 404.