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February 7, 2021

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee  
31 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 121, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 581 – Labor and Employment – Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act) - **OPPOSE**

Dear Delegates Davis and McIntosh,

House Bill 581 requires an essential employer to give a written statement regarding certain hazard pay paid to certain essential workers for each pay period; requires an essential employer to take certain actions related to occupational safety and health during an emergency; authorizes an essential worker to refuse to fulfill work responsibilities under certain circumstances; etc.

Now is not the time to implement new, costly and complex employer mandates. If passed, the bill would create a number of new and onerous requirements for Maryland job creators.

The definitions of emergency, essential employer and essential employee contained within the bill are extremely broad and ambiguous. They go well beyond the scope of the public health emergency we are currently navigating as a result of COVID-19. Nearly every type of employer in Maryland is included in the scope of the legislation, regardless of risk-profile. In fact, 15 industry sectors that contain a combined total of 76 categories are defined as essential employers in the legislation.

The costs associated with this bill would be devastating to Maryland's job creators who are already struggling with a global pandemic and compounding financial implications of other state mandates, like increased minimum wage and paid sick and safe leave. Maryland's employers cannot reasonably be expected to comply with the broad and poorly defined mandates contained within House Bill 581, especially when they continue to overcome the operational and economic implications of COVID-19.

The Charles County Chamber of Commerce, a business advocacy organization of over 500 members and their 22,000 employees, opposes this bill.

**We respectfully request that you give this bill an unfavorable report.**

Yours truly,

Bonnie Grady, IOM  
President & CEO

CC: All members of the Charles County Delegation  
John Chappelle, 2021 Chair, Charles County Chamber of Commerce  
Philip McDonagh, 2021 Chair, Charles County Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee