



House Bill 685

Labor and Employment - Secure Maryland Wage Act

February 9, 2021

Position: Oppose unless Amended

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The *Restaurant Association of Maryland* opposes House Bill 685 as it is currently drafted. However, we have requested amendments through the bill sponsor to address our concerns. We would withdraw our opposition to this bill upon the Committee's adoption of amendments to exclude food and retail vendor employees from the definition of "covered employee" in this bill.

The amendments we requested exclude employees of food and retail vendors, generally operating as separate businesses, from the other "covered employees" in the bill whose jobs largely involve the core operations, security and maintenance of the heightened security interest location itself. The intent of House Bill 685, as outlined in the "*General Assembly Finds*" section (3-1502) of the bill and clearly reflected in its title, is to set a higher wage standard for covered employees in the interest of safety, security and welfare (which generally requires such employees to meet applicable security requirements and training). The hospitality and convenience roles of food/retail vendor employees at such locations are clearly outside the intent of the bill and, thus, should be excluded from the definition of "covered employee."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melvin R. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy