



**BRANDON M. SCOTT**  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**HB 1012**

March 5, 2021

**TO:** Members of the House Economic Matters Committee  
**FROM:** Mayor Brandon M. Scott, City of Baltimore  
**RE:** House Bill 1012 - Thurgood Marshall BWI Workers' Right to Reinstatement Act  
**POSITION: Support**

Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1012.

As the Mayor of the City of Baltimore I am proud to support of HB 1012. In December of 2020, while I was still President of the Baltimore City Council, we passed a bill to ensure that Baltimore City Hospitality workers, who have been laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are recalled to their jobs in hotels and event centers when business returns. We felt this bill was not only a matter of basic fairness to workers who have spent years building careers in the hospitality industry, but also good public policy to help Baltimore's economic recover post pandemic. Thurgood Marshall BWI Airport is a key part of our regional economy. Protecting workers there should be an important part of our regional recovery plan.

The hospitality industry is Baltimore's third largest employer. Our neighborhoods are held together by thousands of residents whose jobs in hospitality allow them to be a stabilizing force in their families and communities. During hearings for our recall bill, workers testified that their jobs allowed them to provide family support and stability, create opportunities for neighborhood sports, and spur community engagement. These workers have been Baltimore's ambassadors for years in their jobs as cooks, housekeepers, and banquet servers and the recovery of our city's economic post-pandemic will depend, in part, on a smooth transition of these workers back to the jobs they have invested years in.

Thurgood Marshall BWI Airport plays a similar role in our regional economy. Pre-pandemic, hundreds of workers were employed performing a wide variety of services at our State's Airport: food and beverage preparation and serving, retail sales, cleaning and other services. Many of these workers are Baltimore City residents.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785  
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136  
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*

HB 1012 would require these private sector employers (excluding the airlines) to recall their employees who were laid off because of the pandemic in order of their length of services to jobs for which they are qualified as business returns to the Airport.

When the pandemic hit, business at the Airport plunged due to a 70% drop in travel. Businesses that operate at the airport have gotten pandemic relief in the form of rent reductions, extended leases and access to grants and subsidies from the government to help them weather this crisis. Workers also need relief and hope. Only 20% of the food and retail workers formally at the airport are working, while 80% have been laid off and without work for almost a full year. These are low wage jobs. The loss of income has been devastating, not only to the workers themselves, but to their communities. Although many of the Baltimore residents working at the airport are young, we find that most have very adult responsibilities. Workers are often contributing income to help maintain their families or are young parents themselves trying to support their children while traveling to and from the airport for work.

We are all very hopeful that the vaccines will get COVID-19 under control and we will once again be able to travel, eat in restaurants and resume other activity. In order for our economy to get up and running again, people need to be back to work and earning a paycheck. At the airport, we will also need to have experienced, trained workers who are already “badged” back at their stations to serve the public.

As we find ways to support economic recovery at BWI, it is important that we look to the needs, not only of companies doing business here, but the workers who have made these business and our communities successful.

Therefore, I respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 1012.