



February 9th, 2021

Delegate Dereck E. Davis, Chair
Economic Matters Committee
231 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FAVORABLE W/ AMENDMENTS

Re: **HOUSE BILL 685 – LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT – SECURE MARYLAND WAGE ACT**

Dear Chair Davis and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

Chimes is a not-for-profit organization dating back to 1947 that assists people with intellectual and behavioral challenges by offering educational, employment, vocational, residential, habilitative and behavioral health services to help them achieve their fullest potential. We currently host services in six U.S. states — Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina — and the District of Columbia and Israel. As one of the nation's largest employers of people with disabilities and neurotypical functioning, we employ over 1,750 people in Maryland through multiple federal and state contracts, demonstrating that persons with severe disabilities can be highly productive citizens when given the opportunity.

This important legislation adds wage protection for those employees working in heightened security interest locations. However, the law as currently written excludes nonprofit organizations from the living wage provision. We ask that this bill be amended to include nonprofit organizations because our employees are entitled to the same safeguards intending with the Secure Maryland Wage Act. If groups like Chimes are not included, we risk even higher rates of turnover than we already experience.

We appreciate you taking the time to address this important issue and should HB 685 pass, we respectfully ask that you amend it to include nonprofit organizations.

Thank you,

Terence G. Blackwell, Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Chimes International Limited