



Testimony offered on behalf of:
THE GARRETT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

UNFAVORABLE:

HB 1326 – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Revisions and Public Health Emergency Leave

**Economic Matters Committee
March 2, 2021**

On behalf of the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, representing 600 member organizations in Western Maryland, I write to express our opposition to **HB 1326 – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Revisions and Public Health Emergency Leave.**

This bill will unnecessarily expand the Maryland Health Working Families Act and place additional burdens on businesses that are struggling just to make it through the pandemic.

The bill removes the agricultural and temp worker exemption and expands the definition of a family member to include someone whose “close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship”, neither of which have anything to do with a health emergency.

It also requires an employer to provide an additional 14 business days, or 112 hours, of new paid sick and safe leave for full time employees during a declared public health emergency, and an equivalent amount of leave for part time employees. These additional days are superfluous as the law as it currently exists already provides sick and safe leave. Employers already struggle with workforce shortages during emergencies and requiring them to provide more paid time off exacerbates the issue and increases costs. Considering how the current pandemic has negatively affected most businesses and resulted in significant revenue losses, adding this paid leave would be devastating.

Additionally, this bill would require an employer to provide paid leave during a public health emergency regardless of how long an employee has been employed. This is expansion goes above and beyond the spirit of the law. The leave would be extended to a new employee that





has been employed for less than six months and the employer would have to estimate the number of hours the employee will work in the future. This is absolutely excessive and unreasonable.

Maryland's job creators cannot reasonably be expected to comply with the expanded mandates contained within HB 1326, especially now, as they struggle to juggle previously passed employer mandates and the operational and economic implications of COVID-19.

The Chamber respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE committee report on HB 1326.**

Sincerely,

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President & CEO

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