



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Letter of Information

Senate Bill 653

Labor and Employment – Healthy Working Families Act - Application

Senate Finance Committee

Thursday, February 25, 2020

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 5,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

SB 653 seeks to repeal the exemption from the Healthy Working Families Act for construction industry employees who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and have expressly waived in clear and unambiguous terms the requirements outlined in the Healthy Working Families Act. Additionally, SB 653 changes the definition of who constitutes a construction industry worker to include: a janitor; a building cleaner; a building security officer; a concierge; a doorman; a handyperson; or a building superintendent.

While not opposed to the very limited nature of SB 653, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is concerned with the precedent set forth in this legislation. By overriding the clear and express agreements made between collective bargaining units and their employers, SB 653 undercuts the trust and intent of the bargaining process.

Additionally, SB 653 removes from exclusion individuals that are reasonably not considered to be in the construction trades. This sets another dangerous precedent by conflating who may or may not be eligible for consideration in other industries when the connection may be limited or nonexistent.