



6240 Old Dobbin Lane ■ Suite 110 ■ Columbia, MD 21045

January 12, 2021

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
House Judiciary Committee
House of Delegates
101 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Charles Sydnor
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate
James Senate Office Building, Room 216
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB289 / SB105 – Peace Orders – Workplace Violence – Favorable Vote

Dear Delegate Atterbeary and Senator Sydnor:

The Howard County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is a business organization comprised of small business, corporations, non-profits, and governmental agencies all working together for the betterment of the Howard County business community. Our mission is to provide advocacy, connections, and access to timely information to advance the growth and success of the Howard County business community. I write to you at this moment on behalf of our 700 plus member companies out of support for HB289/SB105. This bill, if enacted into law, would provide Maryland employers standing to seek a peace order to protect an employee and others in their organizations from an imminent threat of harm while at the workplace.

Over the past several years, there have been three incidents of workplace violence by either an employee, a former employee, or an unhappy customer in Maryland. As a result of rising violence in the workplace, 11 states have enacted Workplace Restraining Order Laws allowing the employer to apply for a restraining order prohibiting acts of violence at the employer's workplace. In Maryland, the employer does not have standing to seek a peace order if it is aware that one or more of its employees is threatened with imminent harm.

The enactment of HB 289/SB105 into law will provide employers in the State of Maryland another tool to protect the health and safety of their employees. Equally important is

the fact that this bill is not a mandate but rather affords the employer the option to seek a peace order should they deem it necessary. The bill also provides employer a safeguard from any civil liability for failure to file a petition on behalf of an employee should an incident occur. The enactment of HB126/SB105 into law will provide employers in the State of Maryland another tool to protect the health and safety of their employees. Equally important is the fact that this bill is not a mandate but rather affords the employer the option to seek a peace order should they deem it necessary. The bill also provides employer a safeguard from any civil liability for failure to file a petition on behalf of an employee should an incident occur.

This legislation allows business professionals the opportunity to do their jobs with peace of mind. One of the hardest parts of having the role of supervisor is employment termination. It is during these tense moments that people become emotional, distraught, and in some cases threatening. The passage of HB289/SB105 would provide employers a way to deter workplace violence from even entering the workplace when they are aware that a threat exists. For the reasons noted, we strongly urge your favorable consideration of HB289/SB105.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President/CEO, Howard County Chamber

CC: Howard County Chamber Board of Directors