



HB 698 - Labor and Employment - State Minimum Wage Rate - Increase

House Economic Matters Committee Hearing on February 22, 2022

Our Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 698 to support hundreds of thousands of working families, including essential workers during our ongoing pandemic. Our Maryland is a nonprofit, multi-issue hub for promoting a just and sustainable future for all Marylanders. Our Maryland currently has close to 55,000 Facebook followers and 14,000 email subscribers from across the state, who care deeply about helping hardworking families who are struggling to make ends meet and who are critical to our local, small businesses and state economy.

With the federal Build Back Better law stalled in Congress, Maryland working families are not getting the reduction in kitchen table costs that they need in health care, childcare and other basic needs to more than account for rising prices.

Maryland's working families – including essential workers in dangerous workplaces such as food service, hospitals and retail during the ongoing Covid pandemic – need and deserve a raise now, not years later. They should not have to work two to three jobs and put their health and families at risk without adequate compensation.

As we know from earlier minimum wage increases, dollars that go into the pockets of working families gets spent at local, small businesses and help to grow the economy for all. In addition, higher wages helps employers attract and retain workers.

Our Maryland worked to stop the misguided effort by Governor Hogan and the Board of Public Works to delay the annual minimum wage increase, removal of this provision is important.

Half of the workers who will benefit from this raise are women and people of color, helping to narrow the gender and racial pay gap. 90% of minimum wage workers are 20 or older, countering a concern often raised by opponents.

For all these reasons, Our Maryland urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 698.

Thank you.

*Larry Ottinger, President
Our Maryland
7004 W. Greenvale Pkwy
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
lsottinger@gmail.com*