



MARYLAND
Chamber of Commerce

LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Letter of Information

House Bill 640

Labor and Employment – Healthy Working Families Act - Application

House Economic Matters Committee

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Dear Chairman Wilson 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 5,500 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

HB 640 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, HB 640 adds that the employee must not be a construction laborer for this exemption.

While not opposed to the very limited nature of HB 640, 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, HB 640 undercuts the trust and intent of the bargaining process.

Additionally, HB 640 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.

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