

## **Testimony in Opposition of HB 1302**

### **Food Service Facility – Retailers of Prepackaged and Pre-Inspected Goods**

TO: Hon. Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Kayla Mock, Political Organizer  
United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400

Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, I appreciate the chance to share my testimony on behalf of our over 10,000 members in Maryland, working on the front lines of the ongoing pandemic in grocery, retail, food distribution, law enforcement, and healthcare. Through collective bargaining, our members raise the workplace standards of wages, benefits, safety, and retirement for all workers.

**We oppose HB 1302 and urge this committee to vote it unfavorably.**

This bill would roll back food and safety regulations on food businesses retailer engaged in selling pre-packaged or pre-inspected goods. These regulations are in place for the health and safety of consumers, workers, and the businesses. Rolling them back could create an environment for sickness, food poisoning, or worse.

Additionally, these regulations are in place to protect workers and keep them safe. Without food protection and regulation, even on pre-packaged or pre-inspected items, workers may be pressured to extend food shelf life, or other things to food items. Anyone who has worked in food service, food retail, preparation, or processing, will tell you safety is always the first thing cut when hours or production time is sped up. In these unprecedented times of illness, safety regulations are not where we should be rolling back measures.

Regulations are in place for the well-being, safety, and protection of customers, processors, and workers. We should not lower the standards of safety when it comes to food, even pre-packaged or pre-inspected food.

**For these reasons and more, on behalf of our members and all of Marylanders, we urge an unfavorable report from this committee on HB 1302.**