



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE PAM QUEEN
HB 229 – Employment for Minors – Opportunities for Work
SUPPORT

Greetings Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice-Chair Brian Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

In Maryland, although adult unemployment rates are declining, youth unemployment rates are at least 2 times higher than adult unemployment rates. Youth are considered as persons between the age of 16 to 24 years old. Currently, adult unemployment rates are about 4.0% in Maryland with national rates about 3.4%. Nationally, youth unemployment rates are 8.2%.

The reasons for high unemployment rates for youth are attributed to limited work experience, skills mismatch, stiff competition from experienced adults for entry-level or unskilled jobs, lack of high school diploma or GED, lack of transportation, and other reasons including limited experience in job seeking and knowledge about opportunities.

HB 229 seeks to better connect eligible youth ready to enter the workforce with potential employment opportunities and job readiness programs. With parental agreement, HB 229 provides the Commissioner of Labor and Industry with permission to share work permit information with apprenticeship, educational, workforce development programs, and employers seeking information about eligible youth with work permits.

This is an important step to address the high unemployment rates among youth workers. I seek a favorable recommendation for HB 229.