



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

March 28, 2023

Hon. C. T. Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
231 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
ct.wilson@house.state.md.us

Re: **SB 0555** – Fair Wage Act of 2023
Position: **Oppose**

Dear Chair Wilson:

The Howard County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is a business organization dedicated to economic, business, and community development in Howard County and the Central Maryland region. In advancing our mission, we advocate for policies that lead to job creation and investment.

The Howard County Chamber opposed the Consumer Price Index for the Minimum Wage. The version of SB 555 before the Economic Matters Committee has been amended to eliminate the CPI; however, the concern remains that there may be an effort to reinstate this requirement, which would adversely affect many employers in Howard County and ultimately their employees.

Simply raising the minimum wage does not solve the basic financial problem that confronts lower wage employees, which is coping with the rising cost of living. Maryland has the fifth highest cost of living in the nation – higher than surrounding states. There is a need to consider other cost drivers such as housing and taxes, both of which are significantly higher in Maryland than most other states. If these issues were successfully addressed, low wage workers could realize greater economic benefit.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leonardo McClarty'.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President, Howard County Chamber