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March 30, 2023

Mr. Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report on SB555, the Fair Wage Act of 2023. As amended, this legislation accelerates the planned increase to a \$15 minimum wage, fully implementing that wage for all covered employers as of January 1, 2024. This legislation increases wages for approximately 163,000 Maryland workers, lifting 120,000 children in Maryland out of poverty.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly laid the groundwork by passing legislation that would raise the minimum wage to \$15 for all workers in 2026, with most workers reaching \$15 by 2025. Today, 1 in 10 kids in Maryland has a parent earning less than \$15 per hour. As our state continues to adjust to life after the pandemic it is imperative that we expedite the minimum wage increase to combat the cost of living. Data has shown us higher minimum wage means higher incomes for the families who will spend that money fastest. More than anyone else, families living paycheck to paycheck quickly cycle every dollar of income back into the local economy by buying essentials. This, in turn, means stronger sales at local businesses across Maryland.

The Moore Administration aims to change the trajectory of our state for generations to come and set up our children to win the next decade. This administration is committed to service. And while they may not all be public servants, the Marylanders who make less than \$15 an hour now serve each of us. They deserve to be treated with respect and their wages should reflect the hard work that they do every day. Accelerating the increase to a \$15 minimum wage step in the right direction that will ensure that more kids in Maryland have enough food on the table, clothes on their backs, and a safe place to live.

Again, I urge a favorable report on SB555, the Fair Wage Act of 2023.

Best Regards,

Myles Hicks  
Deputy Legislative Officer