



**Senate Bill 555
Fair Wage Act of 2023**

**Finance Committee
March 2, 2023**

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports SB 555 which would accelerate the increase of the minimum wage to \$15.00.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors. We serve working individuals and families who despite having full-time jobs must seek assistance and services to meet their basic needs.

Our experience demonstrates that when individuals we work with want to break the cycle of poverty, they need to find “good jobs”. The US Departments of Commerce and Labor list 8 principles of a good job.¹ These include:

1. jobs that pay a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips and commissions;
2. jobs that provide full-time and part-time workers with family-sustaining benefits (health insurance, a retirement plan, worker’s compensation, paid leave);
3. jobs that promote skills training and career advancement; and
4. jobs that embrace diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability

Although Maryland has made progress incrementally to create and sustain more good jobs. Those positions are still out of reach for many of the lowest paid Marylanders. These are the same workers that we cheered during the pandemic for holding essential jobs in retail, healthcare and childcare. The essential workers who risked their health and the health of their families to keep our economy moving during the worst of COVID.

Accelerating the increase of the minimum wage brings us one step closer to creating a base of good jobs so that all Marylanders can find family supporting positions. This is critical for Maryland’s economy, for Maryland’s businesses and most importantly, for Maryland’s children.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 555.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy

¹ Good Jobs Principles. US Departments of Commerce and Labor.
<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/goodjobs/Good-Jobs-Summit-Principles-Factsheet.pdf>