



March 2, 2023

Senate Bill 555

**Fair Wage Act of 2023
Senate Finance Committee**

Position: FAVORABLE

The Fair Wage Act of 2023 would accelerate the implementation of the \$15 minimum wage from January 2025 to October 2023, and tie future increases to inflation. This legislation would raise wages for an estimated 175,000 Maryland workers and their families.

Many Maryland families have struggled to pay for necessities like rent and food while facing rapidly rising costs as a result of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic laid bare the weaknesses in the foundation of our economy, and clearly showed us that families at the low end of our economic scale are especially vulnerable. The federal and state government took swift action during the pandemic to protect families and workers by providing stimulus checks, unemployment support, the child care tax credit, extended paid leave, and student loan reprieves. But many of these temporary safety nets have ended now.

Recognizing this, our FY23 budget included funding to raise the lowest wages for Anne Arundel County employees to at least \$15 per hour. Livable wages increase economic security for our workers, provide long-term benefits for their children, and benefit our communities and local businesses through increased spending. Higher minimum wages are also particularly meaningful for those who are frequently held back by structural barriers in the labor market, like women and workers of color.

Our economy is only as strong as the lowest paid worker, and this bill will help our families meet their daily needs. I ask for a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 555.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman".

Stuart Pittman
County Executive