

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Bill 555 - Fair Wage Act of 2023**

March 2, 2023

SUPPORT

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 555 – Fair Wage Act of 2023.

NASW is the largest national organization of social workers representing over 120,000 social workers and over 16,000 of those are licensed here in the state of Maryland. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

This bill will help Marylanders have a minimum wage and will help to attract more Americans to move to Maryland to have a fair wage. We know that the current minimum wage doesn't help everyday Marylanders in helping to support everyday living and that oftentimes it is a struggle in providing for everyday needs to our most vulnerable Marylanders on a daily basis. Social Workers work every day with many citizens who are trying to make ends meet in their household. Social workers have been and will continue to be on the forefront of these efforts. Social workers are trained to be sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and are committed to ending economic injustice, discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice particularly with the communities and people we serve.

NASW-MD urges you to support Senate Bill 555 and boost the economy and create more inclusive Maryland. Thank you for all you do to reach a stronger Maryland!

Respectfully,

Mary Beth DeMartino, LCSW-C, Executive Director, NASW-MD
Philip Pratt, MSW, Co-Chair Legislative Committee, NASW-MD