



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 2nd, 2023

SB 555
Fair Wage Act of 2023

Senate Finance Committee
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 555 increases the State minimum wage rate in effect for certain periods of time; increasing, except under certain circumstances, the State minimum wage rate in effect for certain periods of time based on annual growth in a certain consumer price index; altering the authority of the Board of Public Works to temporarily suspend an increase in the minimum wage rate; and repealing the requirement that the Governor's budgets for certain fiscal years include certain provider rate increases.

Work has a special place in Catholic teaching. Work is more than just a job; it reflects our human dignity and a way to contribute to the common good. Wages earned from work are the primary way people meet their material needs and contribute to the common good. The family is the fundamental cell of society and where we first learn, love, and develop. A living wage is a fundamental right of workers and a moral imperative of employers because it provides workers with the means and resources to form and support a family.

As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church "A Just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. 'Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural, and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.' Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages."

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for Senate Bill 555.