



**LEGISLATIVE POSITION:**

**Unfavorable**

**House Bill 862 - Civil Actions - Noneconomic Damages - Personal Injury or Wrongful Death**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**Wednesday, March 1, 2023**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,400 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 862 seeks to repeal limitations on noneconomic damages in civil actions in specified personal injury or wrongful death incidents. The Maryland Chamber of Commerce is deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on employers and their employees. For employers, they will see their property and casualty insurance rates increase due to the greater liability exposure this higher limit on noneconomic damages will bring. This is especially problematic for small businesses with razor-thin revenue margins. For both employers and employees, they will see their healthcare costs rise as a product of physicians and hospitals passing along their increased premium rates to patients. This cost will be even more burdensome with the consistently rising cost of insurance premiums.

In the fiscal note for similar legislation introduced in the 2020 Legislative Session that would have lifted limitations on noneconomic damages, Maryland's Department of Legislative Services indicated that, "Under this bill, liability risk for small businesses, including health care providers, significantly increases." With Maryland's consumers already struggling to adjust in this historic and prolonged inflation crisis, continuing to increase the cost of doing business in Maryland will devastate our small business community and deliver worse outcomes for our most vulnerable communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **Unfavorable Report** on **HB 862**.