

February 25, 2025

Maryland General Assembly
House Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition to HB 1413

Dear Honorable Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to represent SHRM and its state council, Maryland SHRM State Council (MDSHRM). I appear before you today as a representative of SHRM's nearly 7,700 Maryland members.

While we support positive work-life integration for Maryland workers, SHRM and MDSHRM strongly oppose H.B. 1413 for its overbroad approach to addressing a challenge many workers face. Our core concern is that the bill's one-size-fits-all approach will have negative effects on both businesses and employees and put Maryland workers at a competitive disadvantage.

Maintaining flexibility is critical in today's global economy. Businesses need to respond quickly to operational demands, and this sometimes requires after-hours communication. Eliminating this common business practice could hinder urgent tasks and delay crucial decisions, jeopardizing the competitiveness of Maryland businesses at home and abroad.

H.B. 1413 also raises significant concerns about enforceability and creates new levels of administrative burdens on employers. The bill grants employees the right to disregard after-hours communication except in emergencies or for scheduling matters. However, the bill lacks clear definitions for these key terms. This ambiguity could lead to confusion for everyone. Employers may face legal challenges if they guess wrong about what constitutes an "emergency" or "scheduling matter" and contact employees outside of permitted times. Employees will be left wondering if they are on safe ground or not, increasing rather than reducing work stress.

We also do not believe that this bill adequately recognizes the vastly different realities various industries and roles face. For example, what constitutes an emergency varies greatly between tech startups and healthcare providers, making this legislation's rigid, blanket approach unsuited as a workforce-wide standard.

Maryland is a leader in global economic development and innovation, and preserving the ability to communicate across time zones is vital for many Maryland businesses. H.B. 1413 would put Maryland companies at a disadvantage in markets without such restrictions, eventually impacting the jobs and livelihoods of Maryland workers.

Rather than implementing sweeping restrictions, SHRM and MDSHRM recommend that the Legislature pursue targeted solutions. We support initiatives like flexible work arrangements

and compensation that reflect the total work performed. These approaches can improve work-life integration for employees without stifling innovation and productivity.

As always, SHRM and MDSHRM welcome the opportunity to work with policymakers to find solutions that promote workplace flexibility while preserving Maryland's economic prosperity. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paige Boughan". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Paige Boughan
Maryland SHRM State Council
Legislative Director