

TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee members  
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor  
DATE: March 4, 2025  
BILL: SB 430 - Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act)

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**MD LABOR POSITION:** Support

The Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) supports SB 430 - Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act). Maryland is at a pivotal moment in its trajectory. The State needs to prioritize economic growth, resilience, and building pathways of opportunity. In order to continue growing our economy and increase labor force participation, Maryland must be able to attract young talent, which includes being an affordable place to live.

Maryland has a historically low unemployment rate. While labor force participation is rising, Maryland continues to have a tight labor market,<sup>1</sup> making it difficult for businesses to operate at full capacity or grow in our state.

For example, our state is experiencing a healthcare worker shortage. According to data from the Maryland Workforce Exchange, there were 26,904 active job postings for health care positions in December 2024, the most of any industry. Projections show that the current gap is only expected to widen. Each year through 2032, MD Labor forecasts an additional 27,491 job openings for health-related occupations to accommodate growth, retirements, and workers changing roles.

Maryland ranks 43rd among states for housing affordability and ranks 9th highest in total cost of living,<sup>2</sup> the highest among neighboring states. This is driving people out of the state, led by young Marylanders aged 17 - 34 who made up 65% of outmigration in 2022. In 2022 alone, nearly 40,000 young Marylanders left the state, according to the US Census.<sup>3</sup>

This problem is only worsening: Polling from the Maryland Association of Realtors has shown that 42% of younger renters are considering leaving Maryland due to housing costs. High housing costs are hampering economic growth in the state.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job Postings data comes from JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey) and Unemployment counts come from LAUS (Local Area Unemployment Statistics).

<sup>2</sup> US News

<sup>3</sup> MD Labor analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from the US Census using IPUMS.

In order to grow our economy, Maryland must be able to attract and retain new talent. This includes increasing housing availability so that young people and families can afford to live in the communities they work. The tables below outline the median wages of firefighters, licensed nurse practitioners, and elementary school teachers by county in Maryland compared to housing costs - both rental and home ownership costs.

As Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate, in the eight counties referenced, housing is unaffordable in almost every county for licensed practical nurses, firefighters, and elementary school teachers. These vital workers help keep our State running – they keep our communities safe and healthy, and educate our children. Yet, they often cannot afford to live in the communities where they work.

**Table 1: Median Wages Compared to Rental costs by County in Maryland**

County	Typical rent <sup>4</sup>	Income Needed for housing costs to be <30% income <sup>5</sup>	Median Annual Income - Firefighters <sup>6</sup>	Median Annual Income - Elementary School Teachers <sup>7</sup>	Median Annual Income - Licensed Practical Nurses <sup>8</sup>
Anne Arundel	\$2,306	\$92,257	\$62,733	Sample size too small	\$63,602
Baltimore City	\$1,656	\$66,257	\$73,082	\$62,089	\$63,683
Baltimore County	\$1,684	\$67,352	Sample size too small	\$62,335	\$63,976
Carroll	\$1,914	\$76,551	Sample size too small	\$62,252	\$67,214
Frederick	\$2,099	\$83,946	\$48,644	\$78,384	\$71,055
Howard	\$2,254	\$90,154	Sample size too small	\$66,308	\$62,576
Montgomery	\$2,323	\$92,932	\$65,087	\$65,371	\$70,117
Prince	\$2,022		\$59,517	\$80,156	\$71,643

<sup>4</sup> DHCD analysis of Zillow data.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> MD Labor. Occupational Employment Wages and Statistics (OEWS) Program 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

County	Typical rent <sup>4</sup>	Income Needed for housing costs to be <30% income <sup>5</sup>	Median Annual Income - Firefighters <sup>6</sup>	Median Annual Income - Elementary School Teachers <sup>7</sup>	Median Annual Income - Licensed Practical Nurses <sup>8</sup>
George's		\$80,892			

**Table 2: Median Wages Compared to Housing costs by County in Maryland**

County	Typical Home Price <sup>9</sup>	Income Needed for housing costs to be <30% income <sup>10</sup>	Median Annual Income - Firefighters <sup>11</sup>	Median Annual Income - Elementary School Teachers <sup>12</sup>	Median Annual Income - Licensed Practical Nurses <sup>13</sup>
Anne Arundel	\$482,461	\$148,273	\$62,733	Sample size too small	\$63,602
Baltimore City	\$180,213	\$62,738	\$73,082	\$62,089	\$63,683
Baltimore County	\$342,777	\$106,638	Sample size too small	\$62,335	\$63,976
Carroll	\$467,801	\$144,296	Sample size too small	\$62,252	\$67,214
Frederick	\$483,826	\$150,675	\$48,644	\$78,384	\$71,055
Howard	\$612,286	\$189,377	Sample size too small	\$66,308	\$62,576
Montgomery	\$613,993	\$182,497	\$65,087	\$65,371	\$70,117
Prince George's	\$418,708	\$128,910	\$59,517	\$80,156	\$71,643

If working families spend less of their income on housing, they will have more disposable income to invest in their local communities, benefiting local businesses and creating a ripple effect throughout the economy. This in turn helps build the tax

<sup>9</sup> DHCD analysis of Zillow data.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> MD Labor. Occupational Employment Wages and Statistics (OEWS) Program 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



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base and create a more robust and resilient local economy. Without an influx of new residents and young families, some communities may be reliant on retired populations to sustain the tax base, putting enormous financial burden and strain on individuals at the time in their life when they are no longer working.

**The Department respectfully requests a Favorable Report on SB 430.** For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti, at [Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov).