

Unfavorable report on HB0503/SB0430

There have historic changes in job market in Maryland in the last four weeks and the Federal Government has announced even more dramatic layoffs in the near future. These changes, in addition to my comments below, make SB0430 and HB 0503 even more inappropriate now than when the bills were first introduced. I would urge you to consider these points and withdraw these bills from the current General Assembly session. There is no good reason to compromise our existing communities now for this legislation especially with job reductions already occurring within the State. The underlying provided reason for this legislation has evaporated!

The Governor's brochure cites a Chamber of Commerce report that there are currently only 33 workers for every 100 jobs in Maryland. Part of the reason for this is the statewide effort to defund the police or tie their enforcement allowances. This has created large gaps in police numbers all over the State especially in MoCo. Similarly, the projected need for 15,000 new teachers to implement the wildly expensive Blue Print for Education artificially increases the projected need. Housing cannot be blamed for worker shortages such as these and recent Federal layoffs make the 33 workers for 100 jobs no longer valid.

One wonders how many of you have read the Chamber of Commerce reference that is in Governor's Moore brochure as it is critical information and only a five-minute read? Please take the time to use the link below and read that reference!

If you go to the link supplied below from the Governor's brochure, you will see that there are a myriad of reasons given for why business is failing in Maryland:
"... a critical loss of competitiveness across multiple factors that businesses consider when deciding where to locate and grow."

Listed reasons for a decline in our economic competitiveness are:

- Deteriorating Business Climate
- Infrastructure Deficiencies
- Prohibitive Costs of Doing Business
- Stagnant Workforce Development
- Regional Competition

Do you notice what isn't mentioned as a reason for Maryland's economic decline?

Housing!

It appears Mr. Moore is trying to blame Housing for all of the STATE economic failures listed in the Chamber article. Note that there are multiple non-housing failures under each of the categories above!

<https://www.mdchamber.org/2024/10/09/charting-marylands-economic-competitiveness-spotlight-on-business-friendliness/>

Earlier this week UMBC published a poll entitled: "Poll: Majority of Marylanders say they have considered exiting the State." "The poll sheds some light on potential reasons for the exodus from Maryland, including lack of "good paying jobs," business climate, and being a good place to retire." Housing again was NOT listed even mentioned as a concern.

In short, there is no foundation for blaming Housing as the cause of Maryland's business crisis. These two bills would only open the potential to compromise the zoning in our existing communities that would further escalate the flight of people out of the State of

Maryland. I have lost many friends and now family members to more tax friendly states. We join the Montgomery County Executive, the Maryland Association of County, and most, if not all, civic associations in Montgomery County in urging you to reject SB0430 and HB 0503 as well as other bills that are attacking our HOA Covenants and zoning laws including HB1234. Let's stop chasing people out of the County/State for greener pastures! It is no wonder our tax base is eroding and we have a fiscal crisis! Instead I urge you to address the business points in the Chamber of Commerce article, cut the spending especially the grant giveaways (e.g. Why does the State give the Olney Theater millions of dollars every year – seems like legislators are picking the winners and losers), and balance the budget like we do at home – cut the spending to match our current income.

As far as the housing concerns should one still exist after all the Federal layoffs, deportations, and reassignments to other geographical regions, build affordable units in urban areas near transit and other amenities so that people would not be dependent on an automobile to meet all their needs. There is no affordable housing in this proposal. With 30,000 to 50,000 layoffs expected in Maryland this Spring, there is certainly no shortage of people looking for a job as there may have been when Governor Moore wrote these bills. The real estate market has already slowed in DC and Maryland is expected to follow as layoffs accumulate.

Lastly, at a community meeting of 40 community leaders in Bethesda earlier this week, there was unanimous agreement that bills SB0430/HB0503 were terribly inappropriate at this time given the Chamber of Commerce report and the mounting Federal layoffs on top of pending deportations. One community leader lamented that most of our Democratic representatives were likely to vote for these bills anyway because few, if any, had the independence and fortitude to talk to the Governor about the current issues and how this bill is only likely to lead to a further exodus of people from the State of Maryland. It would be an even greater tragedy if our elected officials were fearful of talking to the Governor about why bills he submitted months ago are no longer appropriate given the changing economic circumstances. Let's shelve this legislation and concentrate on the budget shortfall and the economic deficiencies elucidated by the Chamber of Commerce.

Paul Jarosinski, President
Cherrywood HOA