



2026 WRITTEN TESTIMONY

WORKERS' COMPENSATION - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
- RETROACTIVE COMPENSATION

HB 346 - FAVORABLE

HB 346 eliminates a gap in benefits that exists when an injured worker whose ability to work is permanently limited. During the time that a worker is unable to work due to a workplace injury, and recovering from their injury, that worker is entitled to a wage replacement benefit called "temporary total disability" (TTD). Once the worker has recovered as well as expected, that worker reaches "maximum medical improvement" (MMI). TTD stops when the worker reaches MMI. The majority of injured workers return to work, or have already returned to work, when the worker attains MMI.

For workers who sustain more significant injuries that leave permanent restrictions on the worker's ability to return to their pre-injury job, however, the worker is entitled to a "return to work" benefit called "vocational rehabilitation" (VR). There is inevitably a time gap between when the worker reaches MMI and when VR begins. During this time gap, the law currently does not provide any payment of any wage replacement benefit, even though all involved parties recognize that the worker is unable to return to work as a direct result of the permanent restrictions caused by the work injury.

This bill would close that time period gap for those workers who are so permanently injured that they must find a new job. By closing this gap and allowing for payment of benefits between the MMI and VR time period, HB 346 ensures that injured workers are not left without income support during the critical transition from medical recovery to returning to work.

**The Maryland Association for Justice urges a
FAVORABLE Report on HB 346.**

About Maryland Association for Justice

The Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ) represents over 1,250 trial attorneys throughout the state of Maryland. MAJ advocates for the preservation of the civil justice system, the protection of the rights of consumers and the education and professional development of its members.

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