



**HB148 Consumer Protection-Labor and Employment-Surveillance Price and Wage  
Setting-Prohibition  
Position: Favorable**

February 10, 2026

The Honorable Kris Valderrama, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee  
Room 230, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
cc: Members, House Economic Matters

Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund is in strong support of HB148. HB148 is important legislation that promotes a competitive and transparent price and labor market by prohibiting the use of surveillance technologies to set prices and wages.

**Prices and Wages**

At Economic Action Maryland Fund our direct service programs served more than 1800 older adults and renters.

The high cost of groceries and other basic goods came up as a point of stress for them again and again. Maryland families work hard to care for their families. But this is becoming harder to do. Technology can be used to increase price transparency and competition but instead stores are collecting reams of personal data in order to charge people different prices for the same items. This predatory pricing model hits older adults hard as well as the 36% of Baltimore City households that do not have cars. These households are uniquely vulnerable to these black box pricing models because it is more difficult for them to shop around and compare prices.

**Technology and Wages**

As new technologies emerge, they hold the potential to both spur innovation as well as reinforce discrimination. Many companies are embracing the use of algorithms to assist in a number of ways including employment screening. However, a recent survey of 500 employers found that a number of industries including customer service, logistics, healthcare, and retail are using black box AI and algorithms to set compensation and calculate individual wages.

This flies in the face of the U.S. long embrace of meritocracy-if you work hard, you will be successful. Instead, with the use of these technologies, corporations can set individual wages

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per hour. Inverting the idea of hard work leads to better wages, research has found that the longer hours individuals worked, the lower their pay<sup>1</sup>.

Predictive analytics may assess a worker's 'elasticity' for low pay; system errors such as penalizing drivers for others accidents or road work when the system was supposed to assess road conditions results in unfair errors that affected pay, and the black box nature of the data may impede organizing for better wages and working conditions, particularly for gig workers.

As low-wage and gig workers live from paycheck to paycheck, Maryland must ensure technologies help workers to thrive rather than depress wages and bonuses.

For these reasons, we urge your favorable report on HB148.

Best,

Marceline White  
Executive Director

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<https://equitablegrowth.org/how-artificial-intelligence-uncouples-hard-work-from-fair-wages-through-surveillance-pay-practices-and-how-to-fix-it/>

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