

MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

The Voice of Retailing in Maryland



HB314 Automation Technology Deployment Assessment and Displaced Employee Retraining Fund - Established

February 4th, 2026

Position: Unfavorable

House Bill 314 is unnecessary and overly broad, and it would impose new regulatory burdens on employers without addressing a demonstrated gap in existing law.

First, the bill’s definition of “automated technology” is extremely expansive and vague. As drafted, it could capture a wide range of commonly used tools—such as inventory management software, scheduling platforms, checkout systems, or basic analytics—that are not designed to replace workers but to support day-to-day operations. This lack of clarity creates uncertainty for employers, exposes them to compliance risk, and could discourage the adoption of technologies that improve efficiency, safety, and consumer service.

Second, Maryland already has strong worker-protection and notice requirements in place. Both the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and Maryland’s existing WARN statute require advance notice to employees and state agencies in the event of mass layoffs or plant closings. These laws already address the circumstances HB 314 appears intended to regulate. Creating a separate, technology-specific framework is duplicative and risks conflicting standards, confusion, and unnecessary administrative costs.

Finally, HB 314 would place Maryland employers at a competitive disadvantage by layering additional mandates on top of existing requirements—particularly in industries that rely on evolving technology to remain viable in a highly competitive market. At a time when businesses are facing rising costs and workforce challenges, new and unclear regulatory obligations are counterproductive.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 314

MRA represents thousands of retail locations across Maryland, including grocery stores, pharmacies, big-box retailers, and small, independent businesses.

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