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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Dear Chairwoman Valderrama, Vice-chair Charkoudian, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report on SB387 - Protection from Predatory Pricing Act. The Protection from Predatory Pricing Act prohibits dynamic pricing and the use of personal data to inform individualized pricing with intent to keep groceries affordable.

As the Trump-Vance Administration's agenda continues to skyrocket the price of everything, Maryland families are struggling to keep up with the cost of basic goods like groceries. The Bureau of Labor Statistics confirmed that in December, grocery prices saw their biggest increase since 2022. For example, coffee prices are up 20%, and beef is up 16%. This is only compounded by the federal government slashing more than 25,000 federal jobs in Maryland alone. In the face of these attacks on the middle-class from Washington, D.C., the Moore-Miller Administration is taking action to protect Marylanders' pocketbooks and lower costs for working families.

There are a number of differences between SB387 and HB895, which passed out of the House. First, HB895 incorporated the Speaker Pena-Melnyk's, HB1475, that required notification if a merchant used an algorithm to set a price. Second, the HB895 includes language that a food retailer or third-party food delivery service provider may not engage in dynamic pricing or use surveillance personal data to set a price for consumer goods, while SB387 states that a food retailer or third-party food delivery service provider may not engage in dynamic pricing or use surveillance personal data to increase a price for consumer goods. Finally, there are additional exemptions regarding consent included.

Technology should work to benefit working families. Smart use of technology can make Maryland more competitive, grow our economy, and protect our people against this onslaught we have seen from our federal partners. The Moore-Miller Administration is proud to sponsor legislation that ensures that groceries remain affordable in Maryland, and looks forward to collaborating with the House Economic Matters Committee, Senate Finance Committee, and advocates to produce an impactful piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
Myles Hicks
Deputy Legislative Officer
Office of the Governor