

SB 857/HB 1356: Labor and Employment - Civic and Related Activities - Protection (Maryland Employee Civic Activity and Lawful Expression Protection Act): Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Finance Committee and Government, Labor & Elections Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SB 857/HB 1356** during committee consideration or floor votes.

The definitions are extremely expansive, covering virtually any political activity, public protest, social media post, petition signing, campaign volunteering, advocacy on public issues, or even attending rallies or meetings—regardless of how controversial, inflammatory, or disruptive the speech or conduct may be to the employer’s business, reputation, or workplace environment.

These bills severely restrict private employers’ ability to maintain workplace standards, protect their brand, manage risk, or enforce policies on conduct that directly impacts the business.

The bills’ vague and overbroad language will invite costly litigation, hinder legitimate employer decisions, and effectively force companies to retain employees whose off-duty actions harm the business—even when those actions are not protected under existing federal or state law. **Small businesses in particular would be disproportionately burdened by the uncertainty and legal exposure these bills create.**

Maryland already has laws protecting employees from retaliation for certain protected activities (e.g., political activity under Md. Code, Labor & Employment § 3-701 et seq., which is narrower and more balanced). **This bill goes well beyond reasonable protections and undermines private employers’ rights to manage their workforce and protect their legitimate business interests.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SB 857/HB 1356.**

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important employment law, business freedom, and free speech balance issue.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals