



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Written Testimony

Senate Bill 886 – Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment – Food Service
Facilities and Minimum Wage

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Committee.

For the record, I am Senator C. Anthony Muse, representing the 26th Legislative District in Prince George's County. I respectfully present this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 886**.

At its core, Senate Bill 886 recognizes a simple but powerful principle: **every worker deserves to earn at least the minimum wage for their labor, regardless of whether they receive tips**. The bill establishes that, as a fundamental component of liberty and equality, individuals working in the State of Maryland have the right to be paid a wage that is at least equal to the State's minimum wage rate without regard to tips received.

Currently, many tipped workers rely on a wage structure that allows employers to count tips toward meeting the minimum wage requirement. While tips are an important source of income, they are not guaranteed and can vary widely from shift to shift. Workers should not have their economic security dependent on uncertainty.

Senate Bill 886 phases out the tip credit over time and ensures that all employees receive the full minimum wage directly from their employer, while still allowing workers to keep the tips they earn. This approach recognizes the dignity of work and promotes greater wage stability for thousands of service industry workers across Maryland.

The bill also strengthens **consumer protections** by addressing the growing use of service fees in restaurants and other food service establishments. Customers deserve transparency when they are charged additional fees, and employees deserve to know that those fees are being distributed fairly. Under this legislation, service fees must be clearly disclosed and distributed directly to the employees who performed the service, ensuring fairness for both workers and consumers.

Additionally, the legislation establishes a gradual schedule for future increases in the State minimum wage and provides a mechanism to adjust wages based on inflation beginning in

2033. This approach ensures that wages keep pace with the rising cost of living while providing predictability for employers and workers alike.

Importantly, Senate Bill 886 also proposes a constitutional amendment affirming that workers in Maryland have a fundamental right to earn at least the minimum wage established by law. This question will ultimately be placed before the voters of Maryland, allowing the people of our state to decide whether this principle should be permanently enshrined in our Constitution.

This legislation reflects Maryland's ongoing commitment to fairness in the workplace, transparency for consumers, and economic stability for working families.

When workers are paid fairly, families are stronger, communities are stronger, and our economy is stronger.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give **Senate Bill 886** a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.