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SB887 – Labor and Employment – Greenhouse Workers – Collective Bargaining and Heat Protection

Hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, March 11, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization that seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Workplace Justice Project promotes justice and equity in the workplace. We work to expand and enforce the rights of low-wage workers to receive an honest day's pay for an honest day's work in a safe, equitable workplace. **The PJC supports SB887, which would ensure greenhouse workers have the ability to participate in collective bargaining.**

SB887 would ensure Maryland's greenhouse workers receive the same unionization rights as most other workers. The Public Justice Center supports unionization rights for all workers, including those excluded from the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 like domestic and agricultural workers. The federal exclusions were based in compromises with Southern states and were "deeply rooted in the racism that structured American society."¹ These exclusions are out of line with Maryland values. Maryland's small but crucial population of hundreds of greenhouse workers experience low wages and minimal employment benefits for a difficult job that takes an enormous physical toll.

Maryland would not be the first state to provide these rights to this population – New York state has already passed legislation giving all farmworkers the right to organize. Providing collective bargaining rights will allow greenhouse workers to join the vast majority of Maryland workers in being able to collectively address their abysmal working conditions and advocate together for better pay and benefits.

For the reasons discussed above, the Public Justice Center **SUPPORTS SB887** and requests a **FAVORABLE** report.

¹ *Thirty Years of Farmworker Struggle*, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/a-new-era-of-farm-worker-organizing.htm> (last checked February 24, 2026).

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