

**NICK'S**

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March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026

RE: House Bill 1229 (\$25hr minimum wage) & HB 1479 (\$18hr minimum wage) & SB 0886

Dear Representative:

My name is Nick Ferrante and I, along with my family, am a lifelong resident and business owner in Southern Maryland. I am writing our local representatives to respectfully request that each strongly evaluate the detrimental effects SB 0086, HB 1229, and HB 1479 would impose on all small businesses and in turn our local community. Small business is the backbone of the State of Maryland, and both bills, coupled with the previously incurred massive wage hikes, will be the cause for small business demise. My family is in strong opposition to this proposed legislation and the long lasting effects it will bestow upon business owners and the employees that depend on them. I am adamant that my businesses will not endure the bill's consequences and I am steadfast that we are not the only small business that senses the same.

My family has operated multiple small businesses in Southern Maryland for 60 years dating back to the late 1960's when Nick's Super Market in Prince George's County was founded. My family currently owns and operates Carrington Center Market, DBA Nick's of Clinton (1989), in Charles County; Market Square Inc., DBA Nick's of Calvert (2006), in Calvert County; and Encore Sausage Company (2017) (previously Nick's Sausage Co. 1989-2009) located in Prince George's County.

Our businesses have incurred the previous minimum wage increases from \$7.25 to \$10.10+ per hour, and then more recently absorbed the \$15 per hour increase, as well as numerous other mandated increased expenses such as Paid Family Sick Leave, etc. We are currently navigating all time high beef prices that have significantly impacted our sales. Furthermore, we are in the middle of one of the biggest downward trends in the alcohol industry. We have already been forced to cut our workforce; consequently, eliminating many entry level positions that employed and gave our youth valuable work experience. On a regular basis, we employ a number of people who are not the primary source of household income.

The economic impact of this wage increase will put many families like mine out of business; subsequently, leave the families that work for us without jobs. As an example with regard to our two

retail locations; if 30 employees, working 40 hours per week have an increase of \$10 per hour, we will be spending \$12,000 more per week, per location, per year. This results in an increase of \$624,000+ per location, per year. Working off a good year's 1% net profit on yearly total sales of approximately 15 million dollars per location, we would not be able to make ends meet. We would have combined increases based solely on minimum wage at \$1,200,000. This will put us at a \$900,000 starting deficit per year between the two locations based solely on mandated wage increases. Unfortunately, this isn't taking into account the devastating impact the wage increase will have upon our production business.

Needless to say, we voiced our concerns ahead of the previous \$15hr wage increase and our local legislature and government told us, "It's simple, you will just have to raise your prices." Coincidentally enough those couple officials were not elected the following cycle. The last wage increase has caused detrimental effects on our local community, making it increasingly difficult to compete in the retail market. As far as each individual in our community, their paycheck looks better with a higher mandated wage, until the government takes higher taxes and they are paying higher prices locally because businesses need to increase their prices. In the end, higher mandated wages is detrimental to all in the end.

Furthermore, the state of Maryland, under our Governor, may be able to operate at a deficit each year, but my family cannot and we will not. This bill will also adversely wreak havoc on the state government with regards to monumental increases in entitlements being paid due to the loss of jobs. In addition to year end income tax, my family's retail businesses paid over 1.5 million dollars in sales tax this past year. The state government will be set up for catastrophe when thousands of other business, similar to ours, close their doors. Increased government entitlements from lost jobs and decreased tax income from lost businesses could spell disaster for our State.

There are many factors that can and cannot be controlled when owning and operating a business. My family will continue to work hard, be ethical, and hold ourselves to the highest moral standards. We will continue to be detailed orientated and put the business first, because if the business flourishes so do the employees. Unfortunately, we cannot control what our elected representatives decide or think is best for the community. We can only hope that each of our representatives will read this and, if nothing else, will have a better understanding of the crippling consequences Senate Bill 0886, House Bill 1229, and House Bill 1479 will bear against our local community and the small business that support its economy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Ferrante', written in a cursive style.

Nick Ferrante