



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0516

### Maryland Department of Labor - Investigation of Complaints - Requirements (Worksite Enforcement Act of 2026)

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Vogel

**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0516 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland values its workers. One very clear way to show support to our workers is to ensure that they have a process for speaking up when things go wrong – to know that they are heard. This is something that the Department of Labor is tasked with doing - investigating worker complaints. However, they do not always have the manpower to investigate thoroughly, and sometimes not at all.

This bill, if enacted, would require the Department of Labor to create a standardized, tiered complaint system that will ensure that at least preliminary investigations are made following worker complaints.

Specifically, the Department of Labor is to establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and investigating complaints, including mismanagement, misconduct, abuse, fraud, waste, and behavior that threatens public safety or demonstrates negligence, incompetence, or malfeasance. They must coordinate investigative efforts with the Division of Consumer Protection of the Office of the Attorney General and, if a preliminary investigation establishes a sufficient basis to warrant a referral, they must refer the matter to the Division of Consumer Protection of the Office of the Attorney General.

The Department of Labor must respond in writing to the complainant within 7-14 days (depending on the type of complaint ) of receiving a complaint and state whether they have the manpower to pursue the complaint or not. If the Department of Labor cannot pursue the complaint, they must provide contact information to the Division of Consumer Protection of the Office of the Attorney General.

In order to help facilitate these investigations, HB0516 requires that the Department of Labor add an investigator for each of five regions in the state and that \$500,000 per year be included in the budget for the Department of Labor to support the new investigators.

Getting to the heart of issues that the Government would not otherwise know about is important for the state and for its workers. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.