

February 26, 2026

Opposition to House Bill 1229 – Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment – Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

To the Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

My name is Robert Collins, and I am the Owner of North Bridge Dental in Elkton, Maryland. We have operated here for 11 years and currently employ 9 people. I am writing in opposition to HB 1229.

I understand the intent of this bill is to raise worker earnings, and I care deeply about my employees. But this proposal would create economic consequences many businesses like mine simply cannot absorb - threatening jobs, increasing costs, and undermining stability. My business is not in the food service industry, but the ripple effect would go across all industries and employees.

Raising the minimum wage to \$25 per hour by 2030 – a 67% increase – is not a small adjustment. For our business, that would mean:

- An estimated annual payroll increase of approximately \$80,080, not including taxes or wages for myself as the owner.
- Pressure to raise prices for our patients. We are largely governed by contracts with dental insurance groups and it is almost guaranteed that the time it would take for those insurance companies to allow us to raise our fee agreements to reflect this wage inflation would not be equivalent to the incredibly short 2030 timeline.
- Difficult decisions about staffing levels, hours, or expansion

This would not only affect entry-level positions. It would impact wages across our entire team due to compression.

What concerns me most is placing this policy into the Maryland Constitution. Embedding it there would effectively lock in sweeping economic mandates with little ability to correct course if the consequences prove damaging. That level of permanence is risky for employers, workers and communities alike.

I am not opposed to fair wages. I am concerned about sustainability – and whether businesses like mine will be able to continue operating and employing Marylanders under this structure.

I respectfully ask you to oppose HB 1229.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

R. Scott Collins, DDS
General Dentist / Owner
North Bridge Dental
Elkton, Maryland