



## House Bill 299

**Position: Unfavorable**

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Date: February 12, 2026

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Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (“Maryland Chamber”) is a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth and opportunity for all Marylanders.

House Bill 299 (“HB 299”) would untenably expand liability for good faith actors and create an overly complex investigatory quagmire that will result in industry confusion, delays in projects, and compliance issues. As a result, HB 299 would disproportionately harm small business and negatively impact Maryland’s economy.

HB 299 would subject general contractors to citations and hold them jointly and severally liable for the actions of a subcontractor, regardless of whether the subcontractor is in a direct contractual relationship with the general contractor. *See page 5, line 31.* As a result, general contractors who act in good faith and operate under the protection of Maryland law would be subjected to untenable liability for actions they did not commit. That liability will force general contractors to take fewer chances on subcontractors who are new to the industry, which will stifle business and economic growth in Maryland.

HB 299 seeks to subject businesses to multiple rounds of costly and time-consuming investigations, even when the Maryland Department of Labor has found there to be no merit for a complaint and no need for further investigation. *See page 9, line 8.* Further, HB 299 seeks to involve the Attorney General in investigations based on a vague threshold, any matter “that is of unusual scope or complexity or involves a novel or complex legal issue.” *See page 9, line 29.* Based on the language in the bill, the Maryland Chamber questions the need to subject businesses who have been investigated by the Department to additional rounds of investigation from the Attorney General.

In addition to liability and dual investigation concerns, the Maryland Chamber is concerned that HB 299 seeks to subject good faith actors to overly punitive measures, additional lawsuits brought by the Commissioner of Labor or the Attorney General, and complex legal and licensing processes. The culmination of these changes will create insurmountable burdens for Maryland’s small businesses who are seeking to operate in good faith. **For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully opposes HB 299.**