



## House Bill 1479

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

**Bill: House Bill 1479 - Labor and Employment - Minimum Wage - Increase (Maryland Raise the Wage Act)**

**Date: March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Position: Unfavorable**

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The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 214,000 rental housing homes in over 1015 apartment communities. Our members house over 571,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 270 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 1479 (“HB 1479”) increases the State minimum wage rate to \$18 for calendar year 2028 for large employers and for calendar year 2029 for small employers; and increasing, beginning January 1, 2029, and January 1, 2030, for large employers and small employers, respectively, the State minimum wage rate in effect for certain periods of time based on annual growth in a certain consumer price index, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Industry.

MMHA requests for an unfavorable report to HB 1479 for the following reasons:

### **I. HB 1479 will result in rent increases in the State of Maryland.**

As housing providers, we employ many entry level positions to provide quality service to our residents. Our entry-level maintenance technicians and leasing professionals are vital to the operations at our apartment communities and complexes. For many of these entry-level professionals, they join our teams in search of a job that requires little experience prior to working for the housing provider. Our dedicated property management teams train these individuals up to their potential; allowing them to grow into their roles and create a career path for themselves should they choose to stay in the industry.

These entry-level professionals are key to a functioning apartment community. If HB 1479 were to be enacted, housing providers would have to choose between downsizing their entry level staff or passing the costs back on the residents. In order to maintain services, MMHA believes that the majority of our members will be forced **to pass these costs back to the residents in the form of rent increases**. In a time where housing affordability has been a stated priority for State and local officials alike, the passage of **HB 1479 will result in higher rents and lead to continued disinvestment<sup>1</sup> from multi-family housing providers in the Maryland market.**

<sup>1</sup>Picciotto, R. (2024, December 23). *Wall Street landlords loved these D.C. suburbs. Rent control ended that. The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/real-estate/wall-street-landlords-loved-these-d-c-suburbs-rent-control-ended-that-a8f166cb>

**II. The consumer price index, as defined, ignores economic conditions outside of the suburban Washington counties.**

While representative of the entire State minus Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, the Maryland Multi-Housing Association is generally concentrated in the greater Baltimore Metropolitan Region. That is why it stands out to MMHA that, beginning in January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2030 under HB 1479, the State minimum wage rate shall be increased by the amount that equals the product of "THE AVERAGE PERCENTAGE GROWTH IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12-MONTH PERIOD" under the consumer price index for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area. Essentially, the rate of increase for the State minimum wage will be based on the CPI in the greater Washington region. **In effect, HB 1479 will compel Baltimore area businesses to be impacted by the CPI for the Greater Washington area, ignoring our own local Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD CPI.** With all due respect to the Washington suburban counties, D.C., and Northern Virginia, their economic conditions should not have such an inequitable and outsized impact that determines policy for the rest of the State of Maryland.

For these reasons, MMHA would request an unfavorable report on HB 1479.

Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at (443) 995-4342 or [mpipkin@mmhaonline.org](mailto:mpipkin@mmhaonline.org) with any questions.