

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Bill 1229 – Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

Dear Chairwoman Wells and Members of the Committee:

As the President & CEO of Garrett Regional Medical Center, an acute care hospital located in Oakland, MD, that provides healthcare services for citizens in Garrett and Allegany counties, I am writing on behalf of the hospital administration and its Board of Governors to voice opposition to HB 1229.

Our reasons for opposing HB 1229 are numerous. The bill's provision that would increase Maryland's minimum wage to \$25 per hour by 2030 – four short years from now – would seriously hamper many businesses, including those in health care, by limiting their ability to grow as well as maintain existing services.

We believe in paying fair wages and supporting the employees who make GRMC one of the highest rated hospitals for quality care in the state. However, as written this bill would seriously impact the services we provide. Hospitals and other health care providers are already facing significant financial pressures with cuts in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. Substantially increasing the minimum wage over four years would impact our ability to provide the quality care the people of Maryland expect and deserve.

As a small hospital in a rural community, this legislation would limit services and result in patients unable to receive care in their community. Unlike larger markets, we do not have the same customer volume to offset dramatic cost increases.

Additionally, wage compression would require adjustments well beyond entry-level positions. To maintain fairness and morale, wages across our entire team would need to increase, compounding the financial impact.

Furthermore, placing this policy in the Maryland Constitution would remove flexibility from future policymakers. Economic conditions change, and locking in a permanent mandate of this magnitude limits the state's ability to respond thoughtfully if unintended consequences arise.

The GRMC administration and board support policies that strengthen workers and communities. Our concern is that this approach is not sustainable and risks reducing jobs, limiting growth, and discouraging future investment in Western Maryland.

I respectfully ask you to oppose HB 1229.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Mark Boucot, MBA, FACHE
President & CEO