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**ROBERT G. CASSILLY**  
Harford County Executive



**ROBERT S. McCORD**  
Director of Administration

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March 3, 2026

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

Re: Opposition to House Bill 1479 – “Labor and Employment – Minimum Wage – Increase (Maryland Raise the Wage Act)”

Dear Chairwoman Wells and Committee Members,

On behalf of the citizens and business community of Harford County, I respectfully submit this letter in opposition to House Bill 1479.

While we all share the goal of ensuring that Maryland workers can earn a fair wage, this legislation would increase the State’s minimum wage to \$18.00 per hour and index it to inflation thereafter. Such a significant mandated increase, particularly when paired with automatic annual escalators, creates substantial economic pressure on small businesses, nonprofit organizations, local governments, and service providers across our communities.

Harford County is home to many small, locally owned businesses that operate on narrow margins. A rapid increase to \$18 per hour, followed by automatic inflationary adjustments, would limit flexibility, increase labor costs dramatically, and likely result in higher prices for consumers, reduced hiring of introductory workers, reduced hours for employees, or delayed expansion plans. For some employers, particularly in retail, hospitality, childcare, and food service, these mandates may threaten long-term viability.

Local governments would also be affected. As a major employer, the County would face increased payroll costs not only for entry-level positions but through wage compression impacts across the workforce. These additional personnel costs would ultimately be borne by taxpayers or require reductions in services.

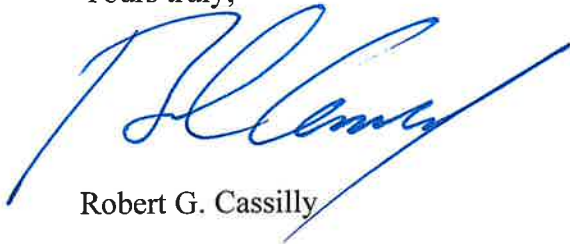
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Importantly, wage policy should account for regional economic differences and market conditions. A one-size-fits-all statewide mandate does not reflect the diverse economic realities of Maryland's urban, suburban, and rural jurisdictions. Moreover, automatic indexing removes legislative oversight and flexibility during economic downturns or periods of instability.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1479. We must pursue policies that support workers while also preserving jobs, economic competitiveness, and fiscal sustainability.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Robert G. Cassilly