



Voting Member Agencies:

Anne Arundel County Food Bank

Baltimore Jewish Council

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Catholic Charities

Family League of Baltimore

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Poverty Free Maryland

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HB 1229

Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment – Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

February 26, 2026

FAVORABLE

Almost 40% of Marylanders are burdened by the cost of their basic household necessities, such as food, housing, and transportation. Financial instability is the basis for many effects of poverty, including unstable housing, lack of accessible childcare, and unreliable transportation. Many economic pressures are out of the control of everyday Marylanders; job opportunities that pay a living wage capable of sustaining a family should not be.

While consistently ranking among the highest median household incomes in the country, Maryland simultaneously has unacceptably high rates of poverty. An illustrative example is peeling back food security in the state: 1 out of every 3 Marylanders faced food insecurity in 2025 with 43% self-reporting that they needed to visit a food pantry in their community. Newly enacted restrictions and limitations to assistance programs such as SNAP and Medicaid from HR 1 are shrinking the safety net, almost assuredly increasing reliance on charitable and community-based organizations and service providers. Instead of a race-to-the-bottom, however, Maryland could uplift and bolster economic stability and mobility for more families. For example, low-income Marylanders have long benefited from a strong Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); the extra dollars in families' pockets not only eases household budgets but strengthens local economies with increased spending.

An often overlooked facet of financial stability is reliability. Industries that rely on tipped workers for example may have changing schedules and available hours and uncertainty about the amount of money earned after a typical day's work. As a result, tipped workers in particular are more susceptible to living at or below the federal poverty line and could face difficulty planning for future financial success.

Ending poverty requires greater inclusion in the benefits of a prosperous economy and strong local communities. To truly leave no one behind, we must ensure that all Marylanders are foundationally supported by an adequate "safety net" and have the tangible reach to economic stability.

Poverty Free Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1229.

*Founded in 2025 through the merger of Welfare Advocates (established in 1979) and Marylanders Against Poverty (established in 1988), **Poverty Free Maryland** is a coalition of service providers, faith groups, and other organizations working together to exchange information, educate decisionmakers, and advocate for statewide public policies and programs necessary to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty and ensure that low-income Marylanders are provided with low- and no-barrier access to all resources needed to thrive and build a better life for the future.*