

HB 1524 - Labor and Employment - Paid Leave - Attendance at School Functions

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

February 26, 2026

Position: UNFAVORABLE

*MHLA is the sole statewide organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of Maryland's lodging industry. Our industry is a powerful economic engine - **765 hotels** support more than **115,000 jobs** statewide, generate **\$7.2 billion in wages and salaries**, contribute **\$2.4 billion in state and local tax revenue**, and drive **\$10.6 billion in guest spending** that strengthens communities across Maryland.*

While we appreciate the intent of House Bill 1524 - to support parental involvement in education - the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association respectfully opposes the bill as drafted because it would create significant operational, financial, and compliance challenges for hotel employers across the State.

Maryland hotels operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Unlike many industries, we cannot pause operations or shift work to another day. Staffing levels must be carefully calibrated to meet guest demand in real time.

HB 1524 would require hotel employers to provide up to two hours of paid leave per month, up to 20 hours annually, for eligible school-related activities. While this may appear modest in isolation, in a 24/7 service environment even small, intermittent absences can create disproportionate operational strain.

Operational Disruption

Hotels rely on precise scheduling across front desk, housekeeping, food service, maintenance, and event staffing. Peak periods - weekends, conventions, holidays - require full staffing coverage. If multiple employees request leave during high-demand periods, hotels may face:

- Staffing shortages in critical guest-facing roles
- Reduced service levels
- Increased overtime costs for remaining employees

Unlike office-based environments, these roles cannot simply be deferred or completed later.

Administrative and Compliance Burdens

The bill would also introduce new administrative requirements, including:

- Tracking up to 20 hours of paid leave per eligible employee
- Verifying documentation of qualifying school functions
- Ensuring compliance with notice and eligibility requirements

For small and mid-sized properties — many of which lack dedicated HR departments — this creates meaningful administrative cost and legal exposure.

Failure to comply could trigger investigations or penalties, increasing both financial and reputational risk.

Financial Impact During a Fragile Recovery

Maryland's hotel industry remains in a soft recovery. In 2025 alone, hotels experienced an \$85.6 million decline in room revenue compared to the prior year.

Mandating additional paid leave, while potentially requiring overtime, temporary staffing, or workload redistribution, increases labor costs at a time when margins remain under pressure from inflation, insurance, utilities, and rising operating expenses.

Even well-intended mandates have real cost implications in a labor-intensive industry.

Collective Bargaining and Policy Conflicts

Hotels operating under collective bargaining agreements may need to renegotiate existing leave structures to accommodate this new mandate, adding further complexity and potential legal expense.

Conclusion

Maryland hotels support policies that strengthen families and communities. However, HB 1524 imposes new paid leave requirements on a 24/7 service industry that is still stabilizing financially and operationally.

The bill would create logistical challenges, increase administrative and labor costs, and expose employers to additional compliance risk — particularly smaller properties with limited staffing flexibility.

For these reasons, the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association respectfully urges an **Unfavorable Report** on **HB 1524**.

For more information, please contact:

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