

Meaningful Worker Protections Require Effective, Timely Enforcement

Position Statement in Support of House Bill 516

Given before the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

We should measure the health of our economy not simply by the number of dollars exchanged or the number of people who go to work each day, but by its ability to raise all families' standard of living. The Maryland General Assembly has taken important measures in the last decade to make this vision a reality, such as enacting a \$15 minimum wage, guaranteeing paid sick days and paid family and medical leave, and requiring employers to provide transparent, informative pay stubs to workers. For these protections to be effective, employers must know that they will be enforced consistently and robustly. House Bill 516 would establish reasonable guardrails to ensure that the Maryland Department of Labor address complaints in a timely and effective manner. **For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 516.**

House 516 establishes the following guardrails concerning enforcement actions by the Department of Labor:

- The department must establish written procedures for handling complaints relating to matters under its jurisdiction.
- The department must coordinate investigative efforts with the Division of Consumer Protection within the Maryland Office of the Attorney General as well as other state or federal agencies as appropriate.
- The department must provide a written response to complainants in a timely manner, ranging from seven days for safety concerns to 30 days for administrative or record-keeping deficiencies.
- The department must initiate a preliminary fact-finding investigation for each complaint within a reasonable time frame to be defined by regulation.
- If the department determines that an investigation is not possible, it must notify complainants of this determination and the reasons for it.
- The department must employ five investigators with regional jurisdiction, and the governor must appropriate \$500,000 per year for this purpose.

Maryland lawmakers have shown through your actions that you value workers' rights. House Bill 516 would back up these values with meaningful enforcement standards.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee make a favorable report on House Bill 516.