



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 24, 2026

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

RE: Opposition to HB1229

Dear Delegate Wells:

The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously opposes HB1229 and its intention to inshrine a state mandated minimum wage into the Maryland Constitution. For many businesses, restaurants, nonprofits and employers operating on narrow margins, HB1229 represents a permanent structural shift in labor costs which will harm Maryland businesses and ultimately leave the State and its residents and workers worse-off financially.

A mandated increase in the State minimum wage to \$25 per hour by 2030 reduces Maryland’s competitiveness amongst its adjoining and regional state-competitors. The economic pain inflicted by HB1229 will be acutely felt in Washington County. As a result of its unique geography, Washington County sits in close proximity to neighboring counties in both Pennsylvania and West Virginia, both of whom compete with Washington County to attract businesses and residents.

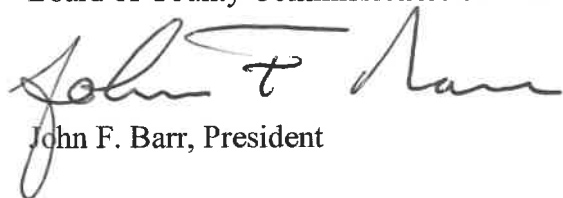
The Board is a strong advocate for the free market and a firm believer that those best positioned to establish the going rate for ones services are the businesses and workers, themselves. In a vibrant and robust economy dynamic businesses invest in themselves and their workers. While workers are able to market their skills and command wages that match their skills and abilities. Allowing a government commission to set the minimum wage based on indices distorts the market and will cause employers to look to establish their businesses elsewhere.

Increasing the minimum wage will further harm new entrants to the job market as employers will hire those with the skills and experience to justify the heightened minimum wage mandate. Instead the minimum wage should serve as a floor or entry point for new and low skill labor. With a lower barrier to entry, hiring and job development is to be encouraged. Instead the entry point for workers is now raised as the mandated minimum wage will serve as a barrier to new and young job seekers.

Finally, HB1229’s codification of the right to a minimum wage set by a State agency reduces State economic competitiveness and responsiveness to changing market conditions, encourages costly litigation and will ultimately serve to drive away businesses, harming the State and its residents. For these reasons, the Board firmly opposes HB1229 and respectfully encourages the committee to refrain from issuing a favorable report.

100 West Washington Street, Suite 1101 | Hagerstown, MD 21740 | P: 240.313.2200 | F: 240.313.2201 | TDD: 711

Sincerely,
Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John F. Barr". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John F. Barr, President