

MATTHEW J. SCHINDLER
Legislative District 2B
Washington County

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations and Ethics

Labor

Local Government/Bi-County Agencies
and Administration

House Study Group on Economic Stability



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3125
800-492-7122 Ext. 3125
Matthew.Schindler@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB37: General Assembly - Employment and Leave Protection for Members
Government, Labor and Elections
February 10th, 2026: 1:00 PM

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair, and honorable members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, I am Delegate Matthew J. Schindler, and I am here to present House Bill 37.

House Bill 37 provides employment protections for members of the General Assembly while they are performing their legislative responsibilities, both during and outside of the legislative session. At its core, this bill is about ensuring that our legislature truly reflects the citizens we are elected to represent.

Maryland's General Assembly is intended to function as a citizen legislature. Yet today, serving in this body is effectively inaccessible to many working Marylanders. More than 20 percent of members of the General Assembly are attorneys, and approximately 16 percent are either unemployed or retired. While these individuals bring valuable perspectives, these numbers also highlight a structural barrier: many Marylanders with full-time jobs, families, and limited workplace flexibility simply cannot afford to serve.

Most members of this body are part-time legislators who maintain careers outside of the 90-day session. Without clear employment protections, legislators may face retaliation, lost income, or inflexible employers that hinder their ability to fully represent their constituents. HB 37 provides a reasonable safeguard, ensuring that no member is penalized in their professional life simply for fulfilling their public duties.

Our legislature should reflect a broad cross-section of the people of Maryland not just those whose professions already accommodate legislative service. HB 37 helps move us closer to that goal by removing a significant barrier to service and empowering citizens to run for office without fear of losing their livelihoods.

Many other states with part-time legislatures recognize this challenge and provide explicit protection. The Minnesota State Legislature acknowledges themselves as "citizen legislators" and one protection afforded to their members states that "If a member of the Legislature is employed in the private sector, they must be allowed to resume their old job or a

position of similar seniority, pay, and status if they reapply within 30 days after the end of the session.” Additionally, “A member cannot be discharged because of time spent in legislative service, nor can they be denied their seniority or benefits.”

Providing similar protections in Maryland would strengthen our democracy, encourage broader participation in public service, and help ensure that those elected to serve can do so without sacrificing their careers.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 37.