



March 5, 2026 Opposition to House Bill 1479 – Labor and Employment – Minimum Wage – Increase (Maryland Raise the Wage Act)

To the Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

My name is Matthew Bennett, and I am the owner/president of Unemployment Tax Service, Inc. in Westminister, Maryland. We employ 5 people.

I respectfully oppose HB 1479 because it combines a significant wage increase with permanent automatic escalators that will directly affect our ability to hire and grow.

HB 1479 would raise the minimum wage to \$18 per hour by 2028 and then require automatic annual increases tied to inflation, with no authority to pause those increases even during an economic downturn. For our business, this would mean approximately 17% in additional payroll costs. To manage that level of mandated cost growth, we would need to:

- Reduce, delay hiring, possible layoffs
- Limit employee hours
- Increase prices
- Postpone planned expansion or investment

These are real tradeoffs. They affect job availability, advancement opportunities and long-term growth in our community.

Although the bill provides a one-year delay for some employers, it ultimately locks all covered businesses into permanent automatic increases. When wage increases are mandated year after year without flexibility, employers have fewer options to preserve jobs and create new ones. Over time, that limits entry-level opportunities and slows economic growth.

We want to pay competitive wages and support our workforce. But policy must balance wage growth with job growth.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1479.

Sincerely,

Matthew Bennett

Owner/President

Unemployment Tax Service, Inc.

Westminister, Maryland