

**Favorable
House Bill 1229
Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities
and Minimum Wage**

**Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 26, 2026**

**Paul Lemle
MSEA President**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1229. This legislation would constitutionally guarantee every Maryland worker a base wage at least equal to the state minimum wage, regardless of tips. This legislation establishes the right to a minimum wage as a fundamental human right.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

This bill advances basic civil rights. A living wage should be earned in a standard working week, without the requirement of exploitative working hours. If we believe that "liberty and equality" apply to everyone, then no worker should have to work more than one job to afford the basics of housing, food, clothing, transportation, healthcare, and much more.

Maryland has already committed to a \$15 minimum wage now it must commit to a living wage for all. This constitutional amendment is setting a new standard, giving the power to the voters to leave no one behind.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 1229.