



February 16, 2026

Government, Labor, and Elections
Delegate Melissa Wells
145 Lowe
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB 1229 – Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage-
Oppose**

Dear Delegate Wells:

HB1229 seeks to increase the state minimum wage via state constitution. Maryland has ranked low on economic competitiveness for many years. A new study by WalletHub ranks Maryland as the second worst state in the nation to start a business. Actions like HB1229 will continue that path.

- **Job Loss and Reduced Hours:** Businesses, particularly in high-labor sectors like restaurants and retail, may cut jobs, reduce staff hours, or stop hiring to manage increased labor costs.
- **Inflation and Higher Costs:** Companies often pass the increased labor expenses on to consumers by raising prices on goods and services, which can negate the increased purchasing power of workers, and discourage business in an already poor economy.
- **Reduced Opportunities for Low-Skilled Workers:** High minimum wages can lead to companies replacing entry-level positions with automation or preferring more experienced workers, making it harder for teenagers and inexperienced workers to find employment.
- **Small Business Strain:** Small, local businesses with tighter profit margins may struggle to compete with larger corporations, potentially leading to closures or market consolidation.
- **Economic Disparities:** A one-size-fits-all high wage may not reflect regional cost-of-living differences, placing an unsustainable burden on businesses in rural areas.



Thomas Sowell has said “Making it illegal to pay less than a given amount does not make a worker’s productivity worth that amount—and, if it is not, that worker is unlikely to be employed.” Instead of raising the minimum wage, state and local governments should focus on job training and educational opportunities to improve individuals’ skills and help them leverage those skills for higher pay.

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, a business advocacy organization of nearly 700 members, opposes this bill. We therefore request that you give this bill an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike McMullin".

Mike McMullin
President
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Delegate Chris Tomlinson
Senator Justin Ready