



Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 166: Labor and Employment - Payment of Wages - Minimum Wage and Enforcement (Fight for Fifteen)

Position: *Support with Amendments*

Bill Summary

HB 166 would specify the state minimum wage rate that is in effect for certain time periods; increasing, except under certain circumstances, the state minimum wage rate based on the annual growth in the Consumer Price Index, and more.

MHA Position

Under Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals are reaching out beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve. The result: hospitals are taking care of the whole person, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors that influence people's health.

No one is more important to this work than the 104,000 employees of Maryland's hospitals. From doctors and nurses to dietary and environmental services staff, each plays a key role in every hospital's ability to take care of people and communities. At the same time, hospitals indirectly support another 113,000 related jobs. As the largest employers in most communities, and the largest private sector employers in the state, hospitals have consistently demonstrated the value we place in our employees through the compensation and benefits we deliver. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour is a bold step in continuing to invest in employees and our communities.

This is a significant investment that hospitals will make. We appreciate that the Committee will consider concerns regarding wage compression, constrained hospital global budgets, and the vulnerability of rural communities. **Extending the implementation of a \$15 minimum wage by one year would go a long way toward addressing these concerns.**

Under our new agreement with the federal government hospitals are working to advance health care and the health of all Marylanders. Higher wages could make it easier for workers and their families to afford prescription drugs, healthier food, and good housing. In short, a considered investment in our workers is an investment in the health of our communities.

For these reasons, we urge you to give HB 166 a *favorable with amendments* report.