Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 831 - Labor Law - Child Labor Penalties, Private Sector Employee Labor Relations, and State Employee Labor Standards

Position: ***Support with Amendments***
March 11, 2026
Senate Finance Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 831 with a clarifying amendment.

We support the goal of this legislation—to codify federal worker protections in state law. We are concerned about one provision that if not amended, could have unintended consequences for Maryland hospitals.

SB 831 prohibits employers from forming certain joint employer-employee workplace entities that address working conditions if those entities are not subject to federal labor law. We believe that the shared governance structures many Maryland hospitals have in place meet the definition of an organization or entity as defined in this bill.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center recognizes hospitals for nursing excellence through Magnet Status and the Pathway to Excellence program.[1] These designations involve a rigorous approval process with numerous requirements. One requirement is to create governance structures for shared decision-making practices that allow staff to offer feedback on policies and working conditions.

In Maryland, nearly 30% of acute care hospitals hold a Magnet designation, and four hospitals have the Pathways to Excellence recognition. Ten hospitals plan to pursue one of these distinctions in the next two years. Achieving these recognitions has been shown to improve staff satisfaction, reduce burnout and turnover, strengthen productivity and teamwork, and increase patient satisfaction. We are concerned that prohibiting types of committees could limit the ability of Maryland hospitals to participate in these important national programs.

The hospital field proposes the following clarifying amendment to permit the formation of committees and governance structures that align with the requirements necessary to obtain designations or satisfy accreditation requirements.

[1] ANA's Principles for Nurse Staffing, Third Edition

MHA Proposed Amendment

Amend pg 6, line 26 - 28:

(C) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO PRECLUDE:
(1) THE FORMATION OF A LABOR ORGANIZATION THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL ACT AND THE JURISDICTION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD~~; OR~~
(2) CERTIFICATION AS AN EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE UNDER THE FEDERAL ACT**; OR**
(3) THE FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE OR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION OR DESIGNATION BY A STATE OR NATIONAL BODY.

For these reasons, we request a favorable with amendments report on SB 831.

For more information, please contact:
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