



**LEGISLATIVE POSITION:**

**Favorable**

**House Bill 1021**

**Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Seasonal Temporary Workers**

**House Economic Matters Committee**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2020**

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 4,500 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees and families.

HB 1021 increases the time from 106 days to 120 days in which an employer is not required to allow an employee to use earned sick and safe leave. Additionally, this bill reduces the amount of time that an individual may be separated from an employer for the employee to be entitled to their prior leave balance from 37 weeks to 32 weeks. This legislation would provide targeted relief for small employers with mostly seasonal employees.

Under the currently Maryland Healthy Working Families Act, an employer has the right to deny the use of sick and safe leave any time during the first 106 days of employment. Employers of seasonal employees are reporting incidents of extreme abuse of the earned sick and safe leave program after the first 106 days since its passage in 2018. This type of abuse has a major impact on employers depending on seasonal employees in a tight labor market. As such, extending the provision to deny the use of sick and safe leave by just 14 days provides employers with a greater window of labor certainty during a very limited work season.

Furthermore, reducing from 37 weeks to 32 weeks the amount of time an employee may be separated from their employer and have their prior sick and safe leave balance reinstated not only provides potential cost savings to small employers but also adds additional labor certainty for small employers of seasonal workers at the start of the following season.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **Favorable Report** on House Bill 1021.