



SB-188
Finance Committee
Public Health - Misbranded Food - Meat Products
Thursday, Feb. 6 @ 1pm
Position: UNFAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee, by name is Dr. Baruk Brenda Sanders and I am the owner Everlasting Life for over 15 years. Everlasting life is a plant-based restaurant, lounge and catering company in Capital Heights. We specialize in plant-based soul food and I host the Elife Radio Show where I engage thousands of my customers from all around Maryland on plant-based health topics to assist my customer with better health.

As am impacted business owner, SB -188 would affect my company in the following ways:

1. I would be limited in labeling my veggie soul food in culturally relevant ways to attract my African-American customer base who want veggie food that is similar to the food they love;
2. I would have to absorb the cost for the additional training costs to train my staff to ensure that my staff do not go to jail for a violation or cause me to be fined thousands of dollars as a small business; and
3. I would not be free to refer to my food on my radio show in a way that is relevant to my audience. SB -188 amounts to censorship of free speech.
4. Me and my team would constantly work in fear that if we mess up can label one of our great veggie foods wrong, we could go to jail. We already are subject to regular sanitation inspections and now we would have to constantly worry about indiscriminate arrests or fines because the bill language is vague regarding what is "meat".
5. SB-188 presumes that my community is ignorant and does not know the difference between animal food and plant-based food.
6. SB – 188 also allows the supremacy of the needs of animal farmers over the needs of communities of color who need to be encouraged to eat the plant-based foods from their mother country without fear.

Black plant-based restaurant owners should not have to operate under these types of onerous requirements that strip us of our dignity and force us to accommodate the businesses of other communities that do not work and serve the needs of my communities.

Therefore, I respectfully requests that SB-188 receive an unfavorable report.

Dr. Baruk
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