

LOVE Maryland PAC Support Testimony for HB1171

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair and the Economic Matters Committee,

For the record, Megan Montgomery, on behalf of the Love Maryland PAC, here in strong support of HB1171. This bill is good for workers, good for business, and good for the state of Maryland.

Thank you to Delegate Charles for his commitment to protecting Maryland's workers and businesses during this incredibly difficult time of pandemic.

Many know Maryland as an affluent state, but there are many employees here in the state of Maryland live paycheck-to-paycheck, and work long hours for low wages. The loss of a job over their very legitimate concerns about taking this novel coronavirus vaccine is a very scary thing to be facing. In Maryland, during COVID low wage earners, women and minorities have been greatly negatively impacted and have been disproportionately impacted by unemployment.

This bill is also good for businesses, particularly small businesses. With the manufactures of COVID vaccines being 100% shielded from liability for their product, workers who are forced to take this new and novel vaccine and get injured may have no choice but to sue their employer. Small businesses are in dire straights right now, and I do not know of any that can afford an expensive lawsuit on top of potentially losing key employees.

We fully support allowing the manufacturers to complete their research so that the employees of the state of Maryland, particularly the low wage-earning employees who cannot survive without their income, are able to make an educated decision based on data and not forced to give up their bodily autonomy just to put food on their table. Most research isn't set to wrap up until the end of 2022. And the research that currently exists does not find a link between vaccination and 'stop the spread' making this bill all the more vital to protect Maryland's workers.

Recent data shows that more than 52% of black healthcare workers do not intend to get the novel coronavirus vaccine at this time. These are not anti-science people- they have dedicated their lives to health care science! Estimates for other's industries is even higher. That is a significant number of individuals who could lose their jobs if their employers decide to mandate this vaccination. We know that many hospitals are planning to mandate this vaccine as soon as it gets full FDA approval, which could come as early as next month!

These workers are the backbone of our state. And their jobs are absolutely in jeopardy if this law is not passed. As you can see from the attached email, some employers are already boasting of 100% vaccine rates for their staff of child car providers. We know that many medical offices are also mandating this totally new vaccine, and that people are being fired for refusing to take it. They are the hardworking employees that as all of us have been cozy in our living rooms zooming for work have been working full time and were risking their lives without proper PPE for months and months. Vulnerable workers need your vote to protect their jobs. Thank you for your support of HB1171.