



Metro Washington Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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An AFL-CIO “Union City”

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Room 231
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Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, and its 150,000 rank-and-file members. As President of the Metro Washington Council, I am writing to you all in favor of **House Bill 0549 - The Fair Wage Act of 2023**.

During the 2019 session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Fight for \$15 Maryland Coalition, advocates, and labor unions raised the needs of working families. The legislature passed a bill to raise the state’s minimum wage to \$15 by 2025. Now Governor Wes Moore is making increasing the minimum wage to \$15 **by October 2023** and indexing it to the cost of living a top priority of his first legislative session.

As someone who started their career working in grocery stores and retail, I understand the importance of this legislation firsthand. Now as the President of the Metro Washington Council, who represents service unions such as the UNITE HERE Local 25 and UFCW Local 400, I know the impact of speeding up the implementation of the \$15 minimum wage will have on an entire workforce. When the price of essential consumer goods constantly rises daily, workers need the finances to survive and live in this state.

I ask that you all push this legislation forward and give working people the money they deserve. Let us take the next steps toward ensuring work, wages, and wealth for Marylanders everywhere. So I ask for a favorable vote on this legislation. Thank you all for your consideration.

In Solidarity,

Dyana Forester
President

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