



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

**House Bill 998 – Employment Discrimination - Maryland Department of Labor –
Unemployment Insurance – Study on Actively Seeking Work Requirements
Wednesday, February 28, 2024**

Dear Chairman Wilson 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 6,800 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 998 requires the Maryland Department of Labor, on or before December 1, 2024, to conduct a study on the actively seeking work requirements of the unemployment insurance system and to evaluate the effects of ghosting on actively seeking work requirements and report on the study to the General Assembly.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Maryland falls in the ‘most severe’ category of their national workforce shortage index.¹ For every 100 jobs available in Maryland there are only 33 workers available to fill them. Coupled with historically low unemployment rates, Maryland businesses of all sizes and industries are desperate to fill positions and build their businesses to their full economic potential.

Unfortunately, it is becoming more common for employers to contact potential employees about applications for open positions only to be met with no response. Known as ‘ghosting’, this issue is a loss of valuable time for the employer distracting from those potential candidates who are legitimately interested in the position or may be a better fit for the roll. Some believe this practice is a function of Maryland’s low threshold of activities that qualify as actively searching for work to maintain their eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits.

HB 998 would direct MDDOL to evaluate other state’s actively searching for work requirements and compare them to Maryland’s existing requirements. The Maryland Chamber of Commerce supports this effort as a means of identifying requirements which may result in a more engaged workforce pool, better connecting potential employees with open positions.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce requests a **favorable report** on **HB 998**.

¹ <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/the-states-suffering-most-from-the-labor-shortage?state=md>