



October 17, 2023

The Honorable Evan Glass
Council President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear President Glass and Councilmembers:

Re: Bill 34-23, *County Minimum Wage - Wage Commission - Established*

On behalf of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), we appreciate the opportunity to express our opposition to Bill 34-23, *County Minimum Wage - Wage Commission - Established*. MCCC contends it is not the role of an unelected commission to advise, industry by industry, on wages or working conditions. This commission will have negative and unintended consequences for Montgomery County's businesses and regional competitiveness.

Having a commission, with little clear purpose or guardrails, to make recommendations regarding wages will create burdens for our local business community. This is uncompetitive not only for chain restaurants, the industry targeted initially in the bill, but for all local business sectors. Additionally, Montgomery County's business climate is diminished by having onerous requirements for the business community that do not exist in nearby or competitive markets.

What is especially concerning is the future direction of such a commission. While the bill calls for examination of wages and working conditions in one industry, MCCC questions what the commission would examine next. It seems likely in such cases that other business sectors will get drawn in to this unelected commission's crosshairs in the future.

This bill is also unnecessary. If there are concerns with workplace conditions or wages, the County Executive and County Council already have the authority to address those directly and do not have to turn to an unelected commission. Furthermore, there already exist numerous local, state, and federal wage and workplace protections.

When businesses look to locate or grow, they seek out a regulatory environment that is fair and competitive. Bill 34-23 would make Montgomery County's regulatory environment uncompetitive, especially when compared to nearby jurisdictions that do not have a similar commission. Businesses need certainty, and this cannot exist in Montgomery County with a continually shifting and uncertain environment where an unelected commission has the power to examine any industry.

Again, MCCC opposes Bill 34-23 and respectfully requests the County Council reject this legislation. As always, MCCC looks forward to working with the County Council on this and other important issues.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georgette Godwin".

Georgette "Gigi" Godwin
President & CEO
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce