



THE VOICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY BUSINESS

Bill 27-13 Human Rights and Civil Liberties – County Minimum Wage – Dollar Amount

Montgomery County Council Public Hearing
October 24, 2013

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, as the voice of Montgomery County business, believes the issue of minimum wage is best addressed at the federal or state level and therefore we oppose Bill 27-13, Human Rights and Civil Liberties-County Minimum Wage.

There are two primary reasons why this issue should be addressed in a broader forum. The first is recognizing the competitive landscape in which Montgomery County operates; Second is enforcing this proposed legislation in an efficient and cost effective manner.

On the issue of competitiveness, there are 24 jurisdictions in Maryland – 23 separate counties and the City of Baltimore. It is clear from the County Council's own fiscal impact statement that the benefits of an increase in minimum wage are difficult to predict. But we do know that the impact of up to 24 jurisdictions each with a different set of rules, such as their own rates of minimum wage, creates more chaos in the marketplace. This, in turn, impedes ongoing efforts to create a predictable business climate that encourages more investment and job creation in Montgomery County. It is, therefore, better to address this issue at the federal or state level.

On the second point, enforcement of this proposed legislation by the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights and the Human Rights Commission falls outside their current area of focus which is concerned with claims of discrimination of designated protected classes (employment civil rights laws). Therefore, again according to the County Council's own fiscal impact statement, if the County were to follow the experience of other jurisdictions, the County would likely need to expand existing staff levels and develop new systems to manage the enforcement of this county-specific wage law. Again, it is better to address this at the broader level.

For these two primary reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce believes the issue of establishing a minimum wage should be discussed and determined at a broader level, as will likely be the case in the upcoming General Assembly.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on the matter.

Respectfully,

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