



February 8, 2017

The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton
Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 379 - Hospitals - Changes in Status - Hospital Employee Retraining and Economic Impact Statements - Oppose

Dear Senator Middleton:

This bill would require a hospital that voluntarily converts to a freestanding medical facility or is acquired by another hospital or health system to pay a fee directly to the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation if workers are displaced. The fee is slated to be paid into a Hospital Employees Training Fund, and also requires the entity to provide an economic impact statement within 90 days of the decision to the Maryland Health Care Commission detailing the potential economic impact of the dislocation of the hospital's employees.

It would seem that penalizing (in essence, taxing) a business for making decisions based on a determination of what is in the best interest of that business's health (and continued ability to employ *some* number of citizens) does not add to an environment that is conducive to attracting or retaining business to Maryland. Furthermore, employers already pay into the Unemployment Insurance Fund for the benefit of Maryland citizens who qualify for benefits. As with many such bills targeting a specific industry or type of business, the likelihood of future amendments to the bill to extend the provisions beyond the original scope is also very concerning.

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, a business advocacy organization of over 560 members, opposes this bill and therefore requests that you give it an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike McMullin'.

Mike McMullin
President
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Senator Justin Ready
Delegate Susan W. Krebs

**Carroll County Chamber of Commerce • 9 East Main Street • Westminster, MD 21157
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