



House Bill 73

State and Local Government and Private Employers – Teleworking

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: January 27, 2021

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 73. While well-intentioned, this bill would place a mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy and maximize the number of employees teleworking, regardless of necessity.

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. There is nothing in HB 73 indicating the State will provide any funding to assist local jurisdictions with all of the costs associated with the logistics, cybersecurity, telecommunications, equipment, policies and procedures, or any other requirements that surround teleworking from an employers' perspective. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all counties have implemented some form of telework, but it is at the county's discretion.

Counties are currently already meeting the spirit of this legislation, but the vague language "to the extent practicable" is concerning as it could place staffing decisions in the hands of the State, instead of local jurisdictions where it is currently and appropriately placed.

Also, the language potentially applies at a position level. There is little consideration if an individual in a given position has performance problems, the appropriate home environment, or whether their work is able to be conducted remotely. On a more extreme reading, one could assume this potentially requires the county to provide the work environment by paying for internet connections to homes that are not served by broadband, ADA upgrades, etc.

HB 73 is unnecessary and oversteps the boundaries of local autonomy and accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **UNFAVORABLE** report on **HB 73**.