



House Bill 317

Labor and Employment – Wages and Benefits – Preemption of Local Authority

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: February 7, 2017

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 317. This bill would broadly pre-empt local governments from regulating the wages and benefits provided by employers. Counties are concerned this prohibition would infringe on local autonomy and flexibility in local governance.

Counties oppose the one-size-fits-all approach of HB 317, which limits local decision-making. The preemption of local authority outlined in this bill would significantly undermine a local government's ability to implement policies that reflect the diversity of local economies. This troubling trend of states restraining local autonomy is a disservice to voters who deserve responsive and accountable governance.

MACo generally stands for the ability of county governments, guided by their locally elected officials, to serve and react to community needs. County governments – who meet regularly year-round and are deeply immersed in the community – are in the best position to manage these local affairs. Local decision-makers are elected to serve community needs, their actions are subject to broad citizen and stakeholder input, and they are directly accountable to voters. This law would diminish local accountability, and local voter input.

MACo believes that HB 317 would infringe on local autonomy and decision-making. Because this legislation would not provide local governments with flexibility in determining local wages and benefits, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 317 and recommends the committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report.