

SENATE BILL 576

K3

5lr3004
CF HB 233

By: **Senators Lam, Rosapepe, Kramer, and Waldstreicher**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2025

Assigned to: Finance

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 16, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Labor and Employment – Mandatory Meetings on Religious or Political Matters**
3 **– Employee Attendance and Participation**
4 **(Maryland Worker Freedom Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of prohibiting employers from taking certain actions against an employee
6 or applicant for employment because the employee or applicant declines to attend or
7 participate in employer-sponsored meetings during which the employer
8 communicates the opinion of the employer regarding religious matters or political
9 matters; and generally relating to employee attendance and participation in
10 employer meetings on religious or political matters.

11 BY adding to
12 Article – Labor and Employment
13 Section 3–718
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Labor and Employment**

19 **3–718.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) "POLITICAL MATTERS" MEANS MATTERS RELATING TO:

(I) ELECTIONS FOR POLITICAL OFFICE;

(II) POLITICAL PARTIES;

(III) PROPOSALS TO CHANGE:

1. LEGISLATION;

2. REGULATIONS; OR

3. PUBLIC POLICY; OR

(IV) THE DECISION TO JOIN OR SUPPORT A POLITICAL PARTY OR POTENTIAL CIVIC, COMMUNITY, FRATERNAL, OR LABOR ORGANIZATION.

(3) "RELIGIOUS MATTERS" MEANS MATTERS RELATING TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF, AFFILIATION, AND PRACTICE OR THE DECISION TO JOIN OR SUPPORT A RELIGIOUS ENTITY.

(B) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO AN EMPLOYER THAT IS A RELIGIOUS CORPORATION, ORGANIZATION, OR ASSOCIATION, OR AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR SOCIETY THAT IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 2000E-1(A).

(C) AN EMPLOYER MAY NOT:

(1) DISCHARGE, DISCIPLINE, OR OTHERWISE PENALIZE OR THREATEN TO DISCHARGE, DISCIPLINE, OR OTHERWISE PENALIZE AN EMPLOYEE BECAUSE THE EMPLOYEE DECLINES TO ATTEND OR PARTICIPATE IN AN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED MEETING DURING WHICH THE EMPLOYER COMMUNICATES THE OPINION OF THE EMPLOYER REGARDING RELIGIOUS MATTERS OR POLITICAL MATTERS; OR

(2) FAIL OR REFUSE TO HIRE AN APPLICANT FOR EMPLOYMENT AS A RESULT OF THE APPLICANT'S REFUSAL TO ATTEND OR PARTICIPATE IN AN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED MEETING DURING WHICH THE EMPLOYER COMMUNICATES THE OPINION OF THE EMPLOYER REGARDING RELIGIOUS MATTERS OR POLITICAL MATTERS.

1 **(D) THIS SECTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT AN EMPLOYER FROM:**

2 **(1) COMMUNICATING INFORMATION THAT THE EMPLOYER IS**
3 **REQUIRED BY LAW TO COMMUNICATE; OR**

4 **(2) CONDUCTING A MEETING THAT INVOLVES RELIGIOUS MATTERS**
5 **OR POLITICAL MATTERS IF ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION ARE VOLUNTARY.**

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.