

**LEGISLATIVE AND ADVOCACY UPDATE**  
**JULY 2015**

Over the recent few months and looking forward to the next few months, the Chamber's focus has been and will continue to be on increased advocacy that affects all segments of our membership and the community. Below are brief updates on some of these current issues.

**Minimum Wage Effective Dates** - Earlier this year, after the urging of the B-CC Chamber and others the Montgomery County Council passed legislation which changes the 2016 and 2017 effective dates for County minimum wage increases. **On October 1, 2015**, the Montgomery County minimum wage will increase from the current \$8.40/hour to \$9.55/hour as scheduled. However, subsequent wage increases will become effective in July instead of October, in order to align the County with statewide minimum wage effective dates. As a result of this law change, the Montgomery County minimum wage will increase from \$9.55/hour to \$10.75/hour on July 1, 2016. It will subsequently increase from \$10.75/hour to \$11.50/hour on July 1, 2017. Be sure to update your accountant and payroll service about this law change.

**NEW MINIMUM WAGE RATE CHANGES AND EFFECTIVE DATES  
IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND THE STATE OF MARYLAND**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Montgomery County</b>	<b>State of Maryland</b>
October 1, 2014	\$8.40	\$7.25
January 1, 2015	\$8.40	\$8.00
July 1, 2015	\$8.40	\$8.25
October 1, 2015	\$9.55	\$8.25
July 1, 2016	\$10.75	\$8.75
July 1, 2017	\$11.50	\$9.25
July 1, 2018*	\$11.50	\$10.10

\*Last increase

**Tip Wage Change** - On June 23, 2015, the Montgomery County Council passed legislation to freeze the County tip wage at its current \$4.00/hour. The B-CC Chamber joined others in urging the County Council to pass this legislation. **This means that the Montgomery County tip wage will remain at \$4.00/hour on July 1, 2015 and WILL NOT increase to \$4.13, and gradually higher, as originally scheduled.** The tip wage in the rest of Maryland remains unchanged at \$3.63/hour.

To address Council concerns about ensuring that tipped employees make at least the full hourly County minimum wage in combined tip wage plus tips, this legislation also requires the filing of quarterly wage and hour reports by employers of tipped employees to ensure compliance. This information can be easily obtained from payroll reports. The County will develop the reporting system at a later date and the Chamber will share more information at that time.

**Bethesda Downtown Plan** – on Wednesday, June 24 Patrick O’Neil, Co-Chair of the Chamber’s Bethesda Downtown Plan Steering Committee, testified before the Montgomery County Planning Board on behalf of the Chamber and our members. His testimony was based on meetings with and surveys of member property owners in Downtown Bethesda for the past two years. Go [Here](#) to see the Chamber’s Testimony.

**Sick and Safe Leave** – on Tuesday, June 23, the County Council unanimously voted in favor of Bill 60-14, Human Rights and Civil Liberties Earned Sick and Safe Leave and today County Executive Leggett signed the bill into law, which **takes effect on October 1, 2016**. From the start, the B-CC Chamber fought against this intrusive legislation and still believes that it will harm many of our smaller businesses will be harmed by this legislation. The final enacted bill can be found [Here](#). On January 29, 2015, Heather Dlhopsky provided testimony ([linked here](#)) on behalf of the B-CC Chamber and since then we worked with other chambers and business organizations to modify the bill to address key concerns of the business community. Important changes from the original bill include:

- An employer may use a Paid Time Off (PTO) policy as long as it meets the minimum requirements of the bill
- An employer that provides up to 56 hours (at the accrual rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked) at the beginning of the year is not required to carry over unused earned sick and safe leave
- The effective implementation date is October 2016
- An employer may notify employees of accrued sick leave through electronic means
- Very part time workers (those working less than 8 hours a week) are exempt
- Probation period of 90 days before an employee can use earned sick and safe leave
- Reinstatement of leave for those employees involuntarily laid-off without cause if rehired within 9 months
- Small Business concession: Employers with less than 5 employees will be required to provide a maximum of 4 days (32 hours) of earned sick leave and an additional 3 days (24 hours) unpaid leave (with the accrual rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked)

To see the video of the County Council session including discussion and votes of the various amendments that were introduced, go [Here](#).

### **Vendor Legislation**

On June 16, 2015 [Bill 32-15, Vendors - Hours and Places of Operation](#) was introduced at the County Council, sponsored by Lead Sponsors Councilmembers Riemer and Navarro, and Co-Sponsor Council Vice President Floreen. Bill 32-15 would define "food service truck" and provide that vendors operating food service trucks may conduct business from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Currently, food truck operators are subject to the same allowed hours of operation as all other vendors under section 47-2(d): Except for a prearranged appointment or with the Director's approval, a vendor must not conduct business before 9 a.m. nor after sunset. In this Section, "sunset" means the time established by the U.S. Naval Observatory for Washington D.C. and vicinity. The Chamber plans to submit testimony but would like to hear from our members on this issue. Please contact Ginanne Italiano at [gitaliano@bccchamber.org](mailto:gitaliano@bccchamber.org) if you have questions or

recommendations regarding this legislation. A public hearing is scheduled for July 14 at 1:30 p.m.

### **Resolution to Improve Department of Liquor Control Operations**

Over the past several years, the B-CC Chamber has strongly advocated for the County to make changes not only to the services provided but to consider the privatization of beer, wine and liquor sales in the County. Included in our Advocacy Agenda is the following goal:

**Privatization of the wholesale and retail beverage alcohol system (distribution and sale of beer, wine and liquor to on premise and off-premise licensees).**

Over the past five months, the County Council's [Ad Hoc Committee on Liquor Control](#) has been holding various meetings and hearings in regards to the services and operations of the Montgomery County Department of Liquor Control. A result of these meetings is a new Resolution to Support Reforms to Improve the Department of Liquor Control Operations and Expand Choice for Consumers and Businesses. The County Council will be conducting a public hearing on this resolution on July 21, Chamber Board member Brian Vasile (owner, Brickside Food and Drink) will be testifying on behalf of the Chamber regarding this resolution and our recommendations regarding the Department of Liquor Control. For more information about the resolution or if you would like to provide input for the Chamber's position on this issue, please contact Ginanne Italiano at [gitaliano@bccchamber.org](mailto:gitaliano@bccchamber.org).

**Economic Development Corporation** – The Chamber has been active over the past year in discussions and meetings with County officials regarding the future of economic development for Montgomery County. To that end, Jennifer Russel testified on behalf of the Chamber in favor of the proposed new Economic Development Corporation. Our testimony ([linked Here](#)) included recommendations for the Corporation's Board of Directors, their budget and other items.

An additional recommendation that was proposed by Councilmember Roger Berliner, supported by the chambers and business organizations, is bringing together the various entities and related personnel into one office that assist businesses already located in the County including the Small Business Navigator, minority and small business assistance programs, small business education and especially informing County businesses about new regulations that are developed (such as sick and safe leave). Although the amendments we offered were not accepted, we look forward to working with the Board of Directors of the new Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation as they develop this new organization and will continue to advocate for the development of an office focused specifically on providing business services.

**Advocacy Agenda** – at our June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Committee members began to focus on the updating of our annual “Advocacy Agenda.” This agenda will be finalized at our July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and then brought to the Board of Directors for their final approval. Please take a look at the [2014-2015 Agenda](#) and let Ginanne know if you have any changes or additions. We also urge you to attend the next meeting of the Economic Development Committee to be held at the Chamber on July 22 at 8am and the Real Estate Committee at 9:15 a.m.