



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

June 17, 2025

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AS SUMMER APPROACHES, MCCR CALLS FOR VIGILANCE AGAINST YOUTH EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION **Executive Director Issues Strong Statement Urging Employers to Protect the Rights of Maryland's Young Workforce**

BALTIMORE, MD – As Maryland prepares to enter the vibrant and opportunity-rich summer season, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) is issuing a powerful reminder to employers, educators, and program coordinators across the state: **Maryland's youth are entitled to the full protection of the law – on the job, in training programs, and in every opportunity they pursue.**

Under **Title 20 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland**, it is **illegal to discriminate against individuals in employment based on their age**. And as internships, apprenticeships, and summer employment surge in the coming weeks, MCCR is calling on employers to ensure that **youth – particularly teens and young adults that are legally authorized to work – are not overlooked, undervalued, or mistreated** because of their age.

“Too often, our young people are treated as expendable labor – given fewer opportunities, less respect, and little protection,” said **Cleveland L. Horton II**, Executive Director of MCCR. “But let me be clear: **age discrimination is illegal, unacceptable, and corrosive to the future we claim to be building**. When we fail to invest in youth, we fail to invest in justice.”

Building More Than Résumés

Summer employment isn't just about making money, it's about building confidence, gaining experience, and launching young people into a lifetime of opportunity. Whether it's a first job at a local restaurant, a competitive internship in a state office, or hands-on experience through an apprenticeship program, every role matters. And so does the treatment our young workers receive.

“We want our youth to feel respected, safe, and valued – not just tolerated,” said Horton. “That means no age-based exclusions. No ‘you’re too young to matter’ mindset. No silent tolerance for disrespect or exploitation.”

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

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A Challenge to Employers Across Maryland

MCCR is challenging every employer – public and private – to ask themselves:

- Are we creating equitable pathways for young workers to learn and grow?
- Are our workplace policies and practices free of age-based bias?
- Do we treat summer workers with the same dignity as full-time staff?

If the answer is no – or uncertain – **now is the time to act.**

“This is not just about compliance. It’s about character,” Horton said. “The way we treat our youngest workers reveals the values of our institutions and Maryland should be leading with fairness, integrity, and bold accountability.”

MCCR’s Commitment

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights investigates allegations of employment discrimination, and provides training and outreach to employers, educators, and communities across the state. As the summer season begins, MCCR will expand its efforts to ensure that all youth – regardless of age, race, gender, or background – receive the protection and opportunity they are guaranteed under the law.

“Let’s build a Maryland where our youth don’t just dream of equity – they experience it firsthand,” Horton concluded. “Let this summer be more than a season. Let it be a statement: **That Maryland protects its future – starting with its young people.**”