

lawfully authorized by writing, shall have the force and effect of estates or interests at will only, and shall not either in law or equity be deemed or taken to have any other or greater force or effect.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1972.

Approved May 5, 1972.

CHAPTER 276
(House Bill 324)

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 31 of Article 9 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1971 Supplement), title "Attachments," subtitle "Attachments of Wages or Hire," correcting certain errors in the laws relating to the attachment of wages or hire.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland*, That Section 31 of Article 9 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1971 Supplement), title "Attachments," subtitle "Attachments of Wages or Hire," be and it is hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

31.

(a) No attachment of the wages or hire of any laborer or employee, in the hands of the employer, whether private individuals or bodies incorporate, shall affect any salary or wages of the debtor which are not actually due at the date of the attachment, and the sum of one hundred twenty dollars multiplied by the number of weeks in which such wages due were earned or seventy-five percent (75%) of such wages of hire, whichever is greater, due to any laborer or employee by any employer or corporation shall always be exempt from attachment by any process whatever except that in Caroline, Worcester, Kent and Queen Anne's counties the exemption for any workweek shall be the greater [or] of seventy-five percent (75%) of the wages due or thirty (30) times the federal minimum hourly wage provided by Section 6 (a) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, U.S.C. Tit. 29 Section 206 (a) (1), in effect at the time the earnings are payable. Every contract or agreement of any character whatsoever of such laborer or employee, the purpose of which is to waive this right of exemption, shall be absolutely void, provided, however, that the salary or wages of any laborer or employee shall not be exempt from attachment, levy or lien at the instance of the State for income tax due the State by any such laborer or employee.

(b) No employer may discharge any employee by reason of the fact that his earnings have been subjected to garnishment for any one indebtedness within a calendar year and whoever wilfully violates this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) and/or imprisoned not exceeding one year.