

**Mid Atlantic Pipe Trades Association**



Maryland House of Delegates – Economic Matters Committee

**TO:** Delegate Derrick Davis, Chair; Delegate Kathleen Dumais, Vice Chair; and Member of the House Economic Matters Committee.

**FROM:** Jason Ascher, Political Director – Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association

**Oppose HB 163 – Labor and Employment – Labor Organizations - Right to Work**

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and its over seven thousand members from United Association Locals across Maryland, I ask that you OPPOSE HB 163.

Throughout the last century workers have achieved great things, from better wages to a safer working environment, to benefits like healthcare, vacation time, and weekends. None of this would have been possible without the freedom to organize. The freedom to organize is what this so-called “Right to Work” laws strips from workers.

“Right to Work” was designed to hurt workers by keeping them from organizing. This action denies them the right to bargain collectively. One of the most significant problems with “Right to Work” laws is they create a loophole which allows workers who choose to not join in the organizing effort to benefit from it while not contributing to the cost of the effort.

“Right to Work” has the effect of decreasing participation in labor unions and reducing the number of workers who earn a good wage with health insurance and a retirement plan while reducing or eliminating their need for government assistance. The only thing “Right to Work” guarantees is the right to earn less money. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics workers in states with “Right to Work” laws earn \$7443 less per year than in states without these laws.<sup>1</sup> These laws do not guarantee a job or that if you have a job, you cannot get fired from it. In Maryland, a contract is the only way for a worker to protect him/herself.

Workers need to earn a fair wage, have a safe workplace, have access to healthcare, and have retirement security. “Right to Work” hurts access to all of these. When workers are given these rights, the middle class grows, and there is greater social and economic mobility.

For all of the reasons listed above, I ask that you OPPOSE HB 126.

Sincerely,  
Jason Ascher  
Political Director  
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association  
7050 Oakland Mills Road, Suite 180  
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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (all industries, all establishments, average annual pay), final 2016 data, accessed Oct. 10, 2017