



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 956 – Labor and Employment – Wage Payment and Collection –  
General Contractor Liability  
House Economic Matters Committee  
February 25, 2020**

**OPPOSE**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 956 – Labor and Employment – Wage Payment and Collection – General Contractor Liability. My name is Donna Edwards, President of the Maryland State and DC, AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments in strong opposition.

SB 853 – Labor and Employment – General Contractor Liability for Unpaid Wages was passed by the General Assembly in the 2018 Legislative Session, and became law on October 1, 2018. After less than six months transpired, a bill was introduced in the 2019 Session attempting to claw back these rights for workers without any time to see how it would play out. There now exists an attempt to undermine it, again, with HB 956.

HB 956 creates an additional obstacle for workers to recover stolen or lost wages. In most instances, workers do not even know who the General Contractor is on a worksite, nor how to contact them. They work directly for a sub-contractor who, if the worker is disputing a pay difference, has zero incentive to help the worker connect directly with the GC. Once a worker for a subcontractor starts inquiring about a GC, that worker will likely be fired by the subcontractor.

There is no benefit for workers with HB 956, but there is a benefit for the general contractors as it removes some accountability for them to hold to their responsibilities. HB 956 also benefits the unscrupulous subcontractors.

**We strongly urge an unfavorable report.**