



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President
Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer
Gerald W. Jackson

HB 804 – Workgroup to Study Maryland’s Emerging Digital Economy
House Economic Matters Committee
March 11, 2020

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

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

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting, with amendments, HB 804 – Workgroup to Study Maryland’s Emerging Digital Economy. My name is Donna S. Edwards and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members I offer the following comments.

The future of work – manufacturing being an industry that will be greatly impacted – is an issue that unions are heavily focused on. The increased digitization and automation of industries, as well as the highly specialized skills that future workers will need in the changing work environment, need to be addressed and properly planned for. Unions that work in Transportation, Manufacturing, Education, and Skilled Trades are working on these complex and intertwined challenges to ensure that we have a workforce ready and trained for the future of work.

HB 804 creates a workgroup to study Maryland’s emerging digital economy, tasking it to look at all facets, from Higher Education to potential tax credits; from re-evaluating current State training programs to recommendations to industry on how best to prepare for the coming transition to “Manufacturing 4.0”. The workgroup must then submit recommendations to the General Assembly on their findings by December of 2021.

The State Federation supports this deep dive into the future of work, but would like offer an amendment to include a member from organized labor, to be appointed by the Maryland State and D.C AFL-CIO. A workgroup tackling a subject this broad and deep needs to have representatives from workers in the affected industries, and on-the-ground experts who are already involved in this transition to the emerging digital economy.

We ask for a favorable report on HB 804, amending it to include 1 member appointed by the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO.