



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 45 – Economic Development – Opportunity Zone Incentives – Alteration of the More Jobs for Maryland and Opportunity Zone Enhancement Program**  
**House Ways and Means Committee**  
**January 28, 2020**

**SUPPORT**

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

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 45 – Economic Development – Opportunity Zone Incentives – Alteration of the More Jobs for Maryland and Opportunity Zone Enhancement Program. 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.

Issues that pervade business tax credits in Maryland are a lack of transparency and thorough detailed reporting. We continue to fund tax credits without the ability of taxpayers to truly see the efficacy of the programs. With greater transparency, we can address weakness and strengths, allowing us to refine and improve the credits for the benefit of workers, taxpayers, and Maryland's economy. We support the expansion of details in the initial impact statement provided by businesses seeking tax credits. Additionally, requiring publication by the Department regarding taxpayer funded credits or projects and their outcomes supports transparency of taxpayers' money.

The foundation of all business tax credits is the fact that Maryland workers, through their taxes, are paying businesses to create jobs. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to demand that those businesses who will be hiring – and receiving our money to do so – are required to create “good jobs” that can lift more Marylanders out of poverty with family-sustaining wages and benefits.

HB 45 requires businesses requesting tax credits in an Opportunity Zone to pay at least 120% of minimum wage to qualify for the credit. This slightly higher requirement in wage payments and increased accountability put these business tax credits on a better footing for Maryland workers and taxpayers.

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 45**