

The CATHOLIC LABOR NETWORK

Maryland House of Delegates – Economic Matters Committee

Chair: Dereck E. Davis

Vice Chair: Kathleen M. Dumais

House Bill 037 – Procurement Prevailing Wage Applicability

Position: Support

The Catholic Labor Network supports HB 037.

The Catholic Labor Network, a national organization with members in Maryland and across the United States, exists to advance Catholic Social Teaching on labor and work.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII laid out the premises of the Catholic Church's teaching on work and wages in his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*. "Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; **nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner.**" That is, every worker has a right to a living wage – and if the labor market does not provide for this naturally society must intervene.

Public contracts should serve as a model for the rest of society, including in wage policy. In public construction, prevailing wage requirements help guarantee that construction workers earn a living wage – and that construction contractors who pay a living wage are rewarded with a fair opportunity to win public contracts. For that reason, the Catholic Labor Network supports efforts to extend prevailing wage requirements to cover more public contracts.

We urge the Committee for a favorable report.

Very Truly Yours,



Clayton Sinyai – Executive Director

Catholic Labor Network

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