



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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## **HB 169 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing House Economic Matters Committee**

**March 2, 2023**

### **SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 169 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 169 directs the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to seek contractors that can provide energy efficiency and weatherization retrofits to low-income residents. The bill sets reasonable requirements to ensure that money in the program only goes to contractors that meet good jobs standards. HB 169 also sets goals for DHCD to hit energy reduction targets with its spending.

Taxpayer funding for any program should reflect our values. When we invest taxpayer dollars into increased energy efficiency programs for Marylanders, we need to demand that the workers doing the weatherization are paid good wages and benefits. If not, our taxpayer money will just add to the number of working families who must rely on public assistance. We are investors in these energy efficiency projects, and, as an investor, we should have demands on what our investment should produce. In effect, they are investing in bringing down the quality of life for all workers. We cannot allow that to happen.

HB 169 requires the following labor standards to apply to all the workers of all the contractors and subcontractors on the project: opportunities for career advancement, the right to collectively bargain, paid leave, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation verification, employer provided health insurance, and a salary of at least 150% of minimum wage. Moreover, it also demands that funding only go to businesses that have followed Federal and State wage and hour laws for the preceding three years.

We need to help Marylanders improve their quality of life and we must ensure that every dollar we spend is advancing our values to create family-sustaining careers. We must do both. For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 169.