



January 24, 2024

The Honorable CT Wilson, Chair
The Honorable Brian Crosby, Vice Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building Room 231
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB 244: Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Act - Civil Penalties - Alterations
Position - Support**

Thank you Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby and members of the House Economic Matters Committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 244.

My name is Victoria Leonard, Political and Legislative Director for the Baltimore-Washington area of the Philadelphia/Baltimore/Washington Laborers' District Council (PBWLDC), an affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LiUNA). The PBWLDC represents more than 13,000 members. Our members are proudly employed on many infrastructure construction projects across the region. Nationwide, LiUNA represents more than 500,000 members.

We support HB 244. It brings Maryland into line with the federal government's OSHA penalties by providing much-needed increases for violations of the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Act. Also similar to the federal government, HB 244 establishes annual increases in the minimum and maximum penalties so that they keep pace with inflation. Specifically, the maximum civil penalty for a willful or repeated MOSHA violation committed before July 15, 2025 will be set at \$15,625 each (up from \$7,000), and the minimum civil penalty for a willful violation committed before July 15, 2025 will be set at \$11,162 each (up from \$5,000). Beginning in 2025, the Commissioner will increase the minimum and maximum penalties by the CPI or a successor index published by the US BLS.

Outdated penalties are a problem because civil penalties are less effective when they do not keep pace with the cost of living. Penalties help deter violations of the important laws, which result in safer, more productive workplaces.

We urge the committee to pass HB 244.