



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

JOSEPH F. DABBS: Business Manager • THOMAS C. MYERS: President • RICHARD D. WILKINSON: Vice President
CHRISTOPHER M. CASH: Financial Secretary • RICHARD G. MURPHY: Recording Secretary • PAULO C. HENRIQUES: Treasurer



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 465 WORKPLACE FRAUD & PREVAILING WAGE-VIOLATIONS-PENALTIES-REFERRALS HOUSE ECONOMICS COMMITTEE 1/31/2024

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Tom Clark, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the Committee. I encourage you to join me in full **support** of **HB 465**, a bill that addresses the exploitation of unknowing electricians and other construction workers throughout our state. I usually write testimony on behalf of the 6000 or so Local 26 Marylanders or the 17,000 IBEW members in the Freestate. Today, I am proud to speak up for the hundreds of thousands of construction workers, union and non-union alike.

Wage theft steals from workers, and unfortunately it is quite often those from the immigrant community. Too often afraid to step forward because of fear of retribution. **HB 465** and the Maryland General Assembly could be the ones that stand up for these Maryland citizens. When the state or a contract directs a specific wage rate, and that rate is underpaid, families suffer and those unscrupulous contracts profit...illegally.

Maryland has become a safe haven for out of state contractors, that use wage theft as a business model. With your favorable vote, Maryland will be open for business for those willing to abide by the law and closed to those willing to steal from hardworking mothers and fathers. **HB 465** protects the worker and the state. When wage theft occurs, the individual suffers, but so does the states coffers, because wage theft is tax fraud. This well-crafted bill sends referrals to the Maryland Comptroller, Attorney General and the US Dept. of Labor among others. It also can make this crime punishable by a fine and or prison time. This referral system and the threat of jail time, will send unscrupulous contractors to another state and keep those companies that play fair, here where they can profit by not having to compete with thieving competitors.

So, I ask you to join me, a union officer and representative, by helping those unorganized (non-union) workers to get a fair wage and level the playing field for all Maryland contractors. It is our chance to help those working families seeking a better life for themselves and their children. I respectfully ask that you give your vote and full **support of HB 465**. Thank you





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