



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

HB 385– Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024

January 31st, 2024

TO: The Honorable C. T. Wilson and Members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports HB 385 and urges the House Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a necessary measure for ensuring that all workers in the state of Maryland get their hard-earned wages and have effective recourse when they do not.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

It is from this struggle that we know that wage theft is too common and painful for working class people across the state of Maryland. Workers even today receive pay stubs that do not detail their pay rates, hours of work, clear deductions taken, or even the pay period itself. Too often, these are also workers who are especially vulnerable, including immigrants, young people, and non-native or non-fluent English speakers.

Unfortunately, Maryland currently stands as an outlier in that it does not have a mechanism through which these workers can fix their incomplete pay stubs. Let us be clear: these omissions from pay stubs are often intentional and are vehicles for wage theft. After all, without complete information about their compensation, workers will not be able to ascertain whether their employer was stealing their wages illegally. It must end.

In order for working class people to get ahead, they must be given a fair shot. This bill does that in a simple and common-sense way. In short, it fixes the problem of employers hiding wage theft with confusing or incomplete pay statements. After all, most employers already put this basic information on pay statements. Standardizing the practice by law and giving all workers the peace of mind (and compensation) they earned is the moral and logical thing to do.

We thank Delegates Long, Boaf, Amprey, Charkoudian, Feldmark, Fennell, Harris, Hill, Kaufman, Martinez, Roberson, Simmons, Taveras, Terrasa, Turner, Valderrama, Wells, Wilkins, Williams, and Woods for introducing this measure and urge the committee to issue a favorable report.