

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

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Rico Albacarys, Assistant Business Agent, IBEW LOCAL 24
Before the House Economic Matters Committee On
HB 465 Workplace Fraud and Prevailing Wage - Violations - Penalties and Referrals

Support

Thank you Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **support** of HB 465. My name is Rico Albacarys, and I am a member and employee of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 24. We represent 2,300 electricians from Frederick to Ocean City. Nationally, the IBEW boasts a membership of over 750,000 with more than 11,000 members in the state of Maryland.

HB 465 introduces criminal penalties for employers who knowingly misclassify individuals as independent contractors, as well as for contractors and subcontractors who deliberately violate State prevailing wage laws. Additionally, HB 465 mandates the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to report complaints alleging tax law violations under specific circumstances to key authorities, both at the state and federal level.

The issue of wage theft demands urgent attention. A 2021 report from the Economic Policy Institute revealed that workers suffer an estimated \$15 billion in losses annually due to minimum wage violations alone. Workers from marginalized groups, including people of color, immigrants, and women in low-wage sectors, bear the brunt of this injustice. Enacting HB 465 would position Maryland among several other states that rightfully recognize wage theft as a criminal offense, including California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and New Jersey.

We urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report for HB 465. Your support for this legislation will contribute to fostering fair and just workplaces across the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,
Rico Albacarys

IBEW Local 24