

Testimony in Favor of Bill HB0339

Honorable members of the committee,

I am writing today in strong support of Bill HB0339, which seeks to establish that the disqualification from receiving unemployment insurance benefits does not apply after the first 14 days of unemployment resulting from a labor dispute. As a shop steward with my union, UNITE HERE Local 25 which is a union representing hotel, restaurant, and casino workers in Maryland, DC and Virginia, I urge you to consider the significant impact this bill can have on workers facing the possibility of going on strike.

Labor disputes, such as the potential strike faced by our union in the coming months, can create a challenging situation for workers who are living paycheck to paycheck or have limited resources. These individuals and their families often rely on unemployment insurance benefits to cover basic necessities during times of unemployment. However, under the current system, these benefits are often denied to workers involved in labor disputes, leaving them vulnerable and at a disadvantage.

Bill HB0339 would rectify this unfair situation by ensuring that workers involved in a labor dispute are not disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits after the first 14 days of unemployment. This will provide essential support and assistance to workers who are facing financial hardship during a labor dispute, helping to alleviate some of the burden on their families and enabling them to sustain their basic needs.

By extending unemployment insurance benefits in such cases, the bill also recognizes the reality that labor disputes are often necessary for workers to negotiate fair working conditions and wages. It ensures that workers have a safety net in place while they advocate for their rights and stand up for their livelihoods.

Moreover, this bill aligns with the principles of fairness and equality that our society strives to uphold. It recognizes that workers should not be unfairly penalized for participating in a labor dispute and acknowledges the fundamental right of workers to collectively bargain for better working conditions.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Bill HB0339, as it provides crucial support to workers during labor disputes and addresses the inherent inequality in the current unemployment insurance system. By passing this bill, you will be demonstrating your commitment to the well-being and welfare of the workers in our community and promoting a more equitable and just society.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Liza Smith
Unite Here, Local 25