



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SB 431 - Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act Senate Finance Committee February 19, 2025

SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 431 if amended. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

A strong workforce relies on highly skilled workers, and unions have long been at the forefront of building and sustaining robust Registered Apprenticeship programs. The labor movement has played a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of apprenticeships, setting high industry standards, and protecting workers' rights to quality training and fair wages. Labor's programs have consistently proven to be an effective way for individuals to gain hands-on experience and technical education, ensuring they develop the necessary expertise needed for their careers while providing employers with a competent and capable workforce. Apprenticeship training emphasizes systematic instruction and experience, allowing new workers to develop their knowledge in all aspects of a skilled occupation as they enter an industry.

Sectors such as building and construction, precision machining, aerospace, woodworking, manufacturing, transportation, and healthcare require a diverse range of specialized knowledge, technical expertise, and mechanical skills to meet industry needs. Our labor movement has world-class apprenticeship programs in all these sectors and expects Maryland to maintain the integrity of apprenticeship programs to provide paid workforce training resulting in successful outcomes for the apprentice to enter a high-road middle class career.

As our state continues to grapple with a severe workforce and skills shortage, it is essential that we maintain strong apprenticeship programs that develop workers with the ability to learn, adapt quickly and have a desire to obtain the highest level of technical aptitude. While we recognize

and appreciate the state's commitment to invest in expanding apprenticeships, SB 431 undermines the core mission and purpose of these programs—prioritizing the development and success of workers who play a crucial role in our state's economic future.

To address this, we propose the following amendments:

On pages 2-3, **strike sections 12.305.3 and 2-104.1 (page 2, lines 32-36, page 3, lines 1-19)**

We believe that the list of nonhazardous occupations, as presented by the Department of Labor is unreliable and poses public safety concerns, therefore, we submit this amendment:

On pages 3-4, **strike lines pertaining to required minimum ratios (page 3, lines 31-32, page 4, lines 1-7)**

On page 4, lines 26-29, replace with:

“On or before [June 30 of] DECEMBER 31 each year, the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, with the following information for the immediately preceding year for five years”

On page 4, under (d)(1)(ii), add:

“(iii) the post apprenticeship wage rates, job placement, retention, and advancement data for each registered apprenticeship program in the State”

On page 5, under (IV) add,

“(V) ANY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS, INCLUDING THE REQUIRING OF REIMBURSEMENT OF INCENTIVES FOR FAILURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM”

On page 7, **strike lines 1-11**

On page 7, line 19, replace “an” with:

“A MARYLAND-BASED”

On page 7, lines 21-22, after “OR” add:

“POTENTIAL”

On page 8, after (c)(1)(IV), add:

“(V) INCLUDE A PROCESS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRAM”

On page 8, after (c)(1)(V), add:

“(VI) EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2030, UNLESS REAUTHORIZED BY FURTHER LEGISLATION”

On page 9, under (7), add:

“(i) A SPONSOR MAY NOT SERVE AS A QUALIFIED INTERMEDIARY AS DEFINED IN 11-410-04”

On page 11, lines 5-8 should read:

“AN EMPLOYER OR SPONSOR AWARDED A GRANT UNDER THE PROGRAM SHALL ATTEST TO ITS INTENT TO RETAIN THE APPRENTICE FOR THE FULL DURATION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP AFTER COMPLETION OF THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AND PROVIDE A PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE RETENTION OF THE APPRENTICE.”