

Mid Atlantic Studio Mechanics and Broadcast Technicians

I.A.T.S.E. Local 487

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Testimony in opposition to HB 163

Right to Work

February 4, 2020

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: David M. O'Ferrall, Business Agent

Passage of this Bill would cost the State of Maryland far more than it could create. In the past when we have appeared before legislative committees we have spoken of good wages and health and retirement benefits for Maryland's working families which are the direct result of collective bargaining. By enacting this Legislation all the momentum in generating good jobs would be damaged and it will create an atmosphere which only promotes lower wages and benefits.

Numerous studies have found that wages for both union and non-union workers are lower in states with right-to-work laws. A study by the Economic Policy Institute found that wages are 3.2% lower in right-to-work states and benefits are 2.6% lower. These numbers may seem small but when you consider what this means to most families it takes on a much greater significance. As the cost of living and healthcare continue to rise do we really want to create an atmosphere which could take away what so many have fought for over the years?

While this Bill does not eliminate unions it goes a long way toward weakening them. Unions have made sure that the working men and women are treated fairly and with respect. Unions bargain with employers on the employee's behalf; by allowing employees to enjoy the fruits of that bargaining on the backs of those who pay dues is patently unfair. By reducing union membership you lessen their ability to bargain and in doing so harm union and non-union employees alike. As the Economic Policy Institute report points out "Where unions are strong, compensation increases even for workers not covered by any union contract, as nonunion employers face competitive pressure to match union standards." Do we really want to be known as a state where you have the "right-to-work-for less"?

Passage of this Bill is about supporting Corporations not job creation – By opposing this Bill you are supporting the working men and women of Maryland who rely upon the work of Unions to support themselves and their families. This is about health and retirement benefits for adults and children. Thousands of lives can be affected for the better opposing this bill.

We, the members of Local 487, IATSE respectfully request that you give this Bill an unfavorable vote.