



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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January 31, 2020

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 163
RIGHT TO WORK
FEBRUARY 4, 2020**

To: Honorable Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: Tom Clark, member, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am urging you to oppose House Bill 163. This so-called Right to Work legislation is designed to weaken the rights of workers. From the panhandle, to the eastern shore of Maryland, from Baltimore city, to the southern counties, the hard-working people of the Free state will lose their voice to bargain and to make their workplace safe.

In 1961 Martin Luther King said, "We must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work'. It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone." The opposing view by, Vance Muse, the father of the "right to work" legislation is littered with racial slurs and evil stereotypes. So much so, that they do not need to be repeated, especially in testimony before the General Assembly. I realize that today's legislation bears no resemblance to this hatred, but the name "Right to Work" will always be associated with these two men. One, a Nobel Peace Prize winner at 35, the other a person whose own grandson described him as a white supremacist and an anti-Semite. I ask that no bill, with a name dripping with racism, ever to be brought before the General Assembly, again!

So now we are left with a bill that is designed to take away the workplace representation of your very own constituents. You can debate back and forth whether that helps our citizens or not, but we can use our neighbor Virginia, as an example. In a recent poll, regarding the welfare of employees, Virginia was dead last. Of course, all the other states with similar laws, are at the bottom of that same list. In fact, they are trying to appeal that legislation, right now in Richmond. Let us not make a mistake that your constituents will regret soon after this law goes into effect. Let's "do right" by the men and women who work and live in Maryland. Let us work on bills that protect a worker's rights, a bill that offers respect and dignity at the jobsite, a bill that works for both business and labor. Let's focus on your constituents between 9 to 5 and not between or before elections.

In closing, I ask you once again, stop using that negative label and by all means, oppose HB 163, today and in the future.

Thank You,

Tom Clark

IBEW Local 26 & Maryland Voter

