



Testimony in Opposition to HB 908

Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification

House Economic Matters Committee

February 25, 2020, 1:00 PM

Submitted by Terrence Cavanagh, Executive Director

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION MARYLAND & DC STATE COUNCIL

On behalf of Service Employees International Union, Maryland and DC State Council, I am pleased to offer our organization's **opposition to HB 908 the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification.**

With over two million members, the Service Employees International Union is the largest union in North America. We are focused on uniting workers, many of them in low-wage, temporary positions, in key service sectors to improve our lives and the services we provide. In Maryland and DC, the seven SEIU locals that make up our State Council represent over 45,000 Health Care, Property Service, and Public Service Workers.

This bill seeks to undo the work that this Committee did over several years. It is supported by the same people and same organizations that opposed the Healthy Working Families Act from Day One and continue to oppose to this day. To no one's surprise, they claim the law is doing them great harm and must be changed. As evidence of that, they point to the people who opposed the bill in the beginning, do now, and will, no doubt, in the future, being against the bill. Do not be fooled.

By requiring "verification" they seek to use that as a deterrent to workers using the leave they earned. Do they really expect low-wage, temporary, seasonal workers to make arrangements to get "verification" for a common cold or stomach virus? The cost of getting such verification would be a deterrent to using the leave. Obviously, this is a thinly veiled attempt to thwart the very intent of the Act. Do not be lead astray.

Our economy has seen an explosion in temporary, seasonal, and part-time jobs. This is the "gig economy". If we deny, as this bill seeks to do, an increasing number of Maryland workers who fall into these definitions, we deprive more and more of the very benefits this legislation sought to address.

SEIU urges a **unfavorable** report of **HB 908**.

Thank you.

