

February 18 2020

TO: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Jermaine Jones, President, Metropolitan Baltimore Council of AFL-CIO Unions,
1st Vice President, Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO

RE: House Bill 1410 – Labor and Employment - Secure Maryland Wage Act

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais and Committee Members, I write to express my strong support for HB 1410 on behalf of the Maryland and DC AFL-CIO and the many thousands of working men and women our unions represent.

The Secure Maryland Wage Act would set minimum wage and benefit rates to be paid to individuals employed at three “heightened security interest locations”: Baltimore Washington Internal Airport (BWI), Pennsylvania Station in Baltimore, and the Port of Baltimore.

These locations are major transportation hubs and significant drivers of economic activity in the region. BWI generated \$4.4 billion in economic impact in 2017, in 2019, the Port handled a record 43.6 million tons of international cargo, while Penn Station serves over 3 million passengers annually.¹

Workers provide vital services at these locations that ensure they are safe and well maintained. By setting minimum wage and benefit rates at these sites, HB 1410 will work to help create employment standards conducive to reducing turnover and improving the retention of experienced and trained employees.

The wages and benefits required by the bill, based on SCA determinations of the prevailing rates of security guards in the area, ensure local job standards are not undercut, and importantly, will give any worker currently paid below them, a better chance of affording a more stable and dignified life.

These locations support the jobs of thousands of workers in our state. Their operations are too important to be compromised by low road employment practices. Similar policies have been

¹ In 2017 BWI reported an “airport generated economic activity” of \$4.4 billion with an additional \$4.9 billion generated by visitors, see https://www.bwiairport.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/bwi_economic_impact_brochure_1217.pdf (pg. 6). The Ports 43.6 million tons of international cargo in 2019 beat out the previous records of 2018 (43 million tons) and 1974 (40.9 million tons). It’s ranked 11th amongst all US ports by tons handled, see <https://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2020/02/13/port-of-baltimore-had-a-record-breaking-2019-with.html>. In 2019 it was reported that Penn served over 3 million passengers between its Amtrak and MARC Penn lines, see <https://ggwash.org/view/73545/baltimores-pennsylvania-station-is-getting-an-upgrade>.

enacted with positive effect across the country including right here in our region by the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority.²

It is in all of our interests to see workers at BWI, The Port and Penn Station receive a fair wages and benefits. I urge to support HB 1410 and to do your part to improve our critical points of infrastructure and the lives of working men and women.

² See <https://www.mwaa.com/about/airport-workers-wage-program>