

Good Afternoon, my name is Lydell Hills and I am here today as an Organizer within Organizing Black. Thank you for including us in this very important discussion regarding the wages for airport security at BWI Airport, the Port of Baltimore and Baltimore Penn Station; all of which hire many Black and Brown employees.

Organizing Black is “for” the Secure Maryland Wage Act and supports raising the minimum wage of these transportation hub workers. We ask that the committee votes in favor of HB 685.

We believe the current minimum wage of \$11.75 is insufficient due to the requirements set to fulfill this position. Airport employees must risk their own safety for the safety of the airport's clients. Staff search for and confiscate dangerous weapons, and are required complete background checks, active shooter response training, and tests to detect suspicious activity. Although these employees' value is clear to the company, they are treated as expendable and therefore vulnerable to management staff that can negatively impact their wages, benefits and job security.

We've heard and seek to amplify the stories of workers, traumatized and afraid to come forward out of fear for keeping their jobs. They shared the ways their managers played them against each other. Management discarded workers with much needed experience in order to offer less benefits and lower pay to newer unsuspecting workers. Workers have commented how dangerous maintaining national security can be and thus how important it is to have trained personnel since many new employees may not know what to look for or the severity of the risk. Not only is the management morally corrupt and mistreating workers, but they are also putting their clients at risk! This poor compensation does a disservice to the employees who work so hard, but also to the customers who are unknowingly putting themselves at risk by choosing airports where staff are likely to have less incentive to stay and build experience within their position, creating an unmotivated and distracted workforce in locations essential to national security.

Help us protect vulnerable workers! We demand that you take a public stance and vote in favor “for” the Secure Wage Act. In doing so we hope to establish a higher minimum wage for transportation hub workers, ensuring all workers receive appropriate compensation for their contribution and labor!

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