

Musicians' Association of Metropolitan Baltimore

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Local 40-543
American Federation of Musicians
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Michael Decker
President

Mary C. Plaine
Secretary-Treasurer

March 2, 2021

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321 Labor and Employment – Right to Work March 5, 2021

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Mary C. Plaine, Secretary-Treasurer, The Musicians' Association of Metropolitan Baltimore, Local 40-543

This letter is in opposition to House Bill 1321. On behalf of our hundreds of members, The Musicians' Association of Metropolitan Baltimore strongly objects to HB 1321 and asks that the House Economic Matters Committee vote AGAINST it.

"Right to Work" is a misnomer: The legislation should be entitled "Right to work for less by weakening the ability of working people to have good wages, decent benefits and healthy working conditions."

Any attempt to undercut the ability of working people to form and maintain meaningful unions weakens the middle class and a strong economic base for the State of Maryland. Studies have shown that states that have well-supported unionized work forces have citizens who earn more money than states with "right to starve" laws in place. Why would the Maryland state legislature want to "fix" a problem that does not exist?

Again, Local 40-543 urges members of the House Economic Matters Committee to vote AGAINST House Bill 1321.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary C. Plaine".

Mary C. Plaine
Secretary-Treasurer

Support Live Music



House Bill 1321 - Labor and Employment – Right to Work

Date of Hearing: March 5th, 2021

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

From: Chris Standing, President of AFSCME Local 2380, Montgomery College

Good Afternoon Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB1321. Collective Bargaining means being at the table to mediate and discuss matters that effect the employees. Collective Bargaining is a tool to resolve conflicts and negotiate solutions. I urge you to oppose HB 1321 because it is not good for Maryland.

Collective Bargaining provides the checks and balances needed to ensure employees are empowered within business. Management still has the right to create policy and procedure and still retains the right to manage. Collective Bargaining is the liaison between the employees and management. This ensures that management and employees both understand the intent, the vision and principles of the management.

The worst thing that can happen to a community is a business closes or moves. Collective Bargaining, working collaboratively with management ensures long term planning, that brings stability to the community. Markets change so business and Collective bargaining have to evolve together. During the UAW negotiations with Ford, Ford was extremely transparent and worked with the UAW so they and their members knew exactly what was going on. The result was good deal for the UAW and Ford.

We can learn from this example that Collective Bargaining and Management can work together. We have all heard the proverb, “Power corrupts an absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Collective Bargaining and Management working together ensures fairness, ethical policies and open doors that encourage discussion.

I am requesting that you oppose HB 1321-Right to Work, because we are better than this.

Regards,

Chris Standing



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL
EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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HB 1321 LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT- LABOR ORGANIZATIONS- RIGHT TO WORK
HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE
March 5th, 2021

AFSCME Maryland Council 67 representing public employees across Maryland State's and local government, stands in opposition to HB 1321.

"Right to work" is the name for a policy that is designed to take away the rights of hard-working people. Supporters of right to work claim that these laws protect workers from being forced to join a union. The reality is that federal law already makes it illegal to force someone to join a union. The real purpose of right to work is to tilt the balance towards big corporations and further rig the system at the expense of working families. These laws make it harder for workers to form unions and to collectively bargain for fair wages, benefits, and proper working conditions.

Supporters of right to work claim that it will help spur job growth and attract new companies to states which is quite the misconception considering states with the highest unemployment rates are also right to work states. Many factors influence business site location decisions, but right to work isn't among the top five – not even in the top ten. The availability of skilled laborers, the quality of life the company's executives will have, access to major highways, proximity to markets, robust telecom infrastructure, facility and energy costs, the provision of training subsidies, construction costs, and corporate tax incentives matter the most —not right to work laws.

As the elected union for most bargaining units of State and Local/Municipal Government Employees, AFSCME negotiates for wages, benefits, and working conditions on behalf of employees. AFSCME represents all the workers in a collective bargaining unit, whether they are a union member or not, to ensure that both the employer and the employees agreed upon contract is properly enforced. Most importantly, we work with the employee's state and local government agencies to create things such as labor-management committees in order to work collaboratively to find resolutions on the many issues impacting government operations. For example, short staffing in state government, cost savings work projects in cities and counties. During the pandemic in some situation, we were able to voice our concerns regarding keeping our members safe, especially those essential workers who continued to keeping Maryland running. Enacting right to work would undo gains won over the years in Maryland for workers.

For these reasons we urge the committee to vote UNFAVORABLY on HB 1321.

Marietta English
PRESIDENT

Kenya Campbell
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony submitted to
The Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
HB 1321 – Right to Work
March 5, 2021**

OPPOSE

Chair Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee. On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 educators, government, and healthcare workers across Maryland, I urge you to oppose HB 1321 – the so called “Right to Work” bill, that is nothing less than an attack on America’s middle class.

The goal of this bill is to weaken the collective bargaining rights of Maryland’s workers. By doing so, it will work to eliminate the strong middle class in our state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), workers in right to work states earn an average of \$6,000 less per year and are also less likely to be offered health insurance and retirement security.

Evidence shows, public health is better overall in states without right to work laws. The United Health Foundation (UHF), which publishes America’s Health Rankings, reports that in 2016, eight of the top ten healthiest states were free from this law, while nine of the ten unhealthiest states were right to work.

Furthermore, the BLS reports the rate of fatalities in the workplace is 54 percent higher in right to work states.

An important issue to Maryland, as we work to reform the education system in our state – funding for public schools is \$3,300 less per student in right to work states. This drives away good teachers and staff, making right to work states most of the lowest performing in the nation.

The right to work law is not just - right to work for less money and benefits, it also means less safety, less health care and less money for education in our state.

I urge you to oppose HB 1321.

Marietta English
President

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Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 **HB 1321 -Labor and Employment - Right to Work** **March 5th, 2021**

TO: The Honorable Dereck E. Davis and Members Of Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Brian Wivell, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

At the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 we represent over 13,000 workers and retirees performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers and an engine for the middle-class of this region. So called “right to work” proposals are an attack on the power of working people and unions. It’s that simple. Proponents of these laws like to claim that they’re protecting the freedom of workers, but their true intentions are to weaken the power of workers to bargain collectively.

It's helpful to understand the racist history of “right to work” proposals and their original intention to divide working people. Right to work laws first popped up in the Jim Crow south as a way to undermine industrial organizing efforts that united working people into multiracial unions. Big businesses realized that they could undermine the unions by preying on the racism of white workers. Vance Muse, one of the main organizers behind the promotion of Right to Work laws in the ‘40s, distributed literature saying, “white women and white men will be forced into organizations [labor unions] with black African apes whom they will have to call ‘brother’ or lose their jobs.” There is no escaping this history.

We also know firsthand that “Right to Work” isn’t understood by workers as being about their freedom, but about a state being anti-union and opposing their organizing efforts. One of the first things we hear in Virginia when we organize workers is “But this is a right to work state? How can we have a union?” When the police kicked us off the premises at Cinder Bed Bus Garage when we were organizing workers in 2018, they said “This is Virginia, this is a Right to Work state.” Both of these comments are nonsensical. Right to work laws have nothing to do with any of those aspects of labor relations. But Right to Work laws are ultimately a signal to the working people of that area whether or not they live in an “anti-union” state. By passing a right to work law, you are telling the working people of your state that the government disapproves of any attempt that you make to work together to improve your conditions.

We encourage all committee members to stand against this anti-union bill.



Maryland House of Delegates – Economic Matters Committee

Chair: Dereck E. Davis

Vice Chair: Kathleen M. Dumais

House Bill 1321– Labor and Employment - Right to Work

Electrical Workers

Position: Oppose

Insulators

Boilermakers

United Association

Roofers

Cement Masons

Teamsters

Laborers

Bricklayers

Ironworkers

Sheet Metal Workers

Elevator Constructors

Painters

Operating Engineers

Carpenters

The Baltimore DC Metro Building Trades Council opposes HB 1321. Right to work is not right for Maryland. In 1947 Congress passed the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, generally known as the Taft–Hartley Act, over President Harry S. Truman's veto. The act repealed some parts of the Wagner Act, including outlawing the closed shop. Section 14(b) of the Taft–Hartley Act also authorizes individual states (but not local governments, such as cities or counties) to outlaw the union shop and agency shop for employees working in their jurisdictions. Any state law that outlaws such arrangements is known as a right-to-work state. In the early development of the right-to-work policy, segregationist sentiment was used as an argument, as many people in the South felt that it was wrong for blacks and whites to belong to the same unions. Vance Muse, one of the early developers of the policy in Texas, used that argument in the development of anti-union laws in Texas in the 1940s. Mississippi adopted right to work in 1954. It has been and continues to be the poorest state in the country. The U.S. median income is \$62,843 with person's in poverty at 10.5%. Mississippi has a median income of \$45,081 with poverty at 19.6%. Maryland is the wealthiest state in the U.S. with a median income of \$84,805 and poverty at 9%. We must be doing something right and if it ain't broke don't fix it. This is anti union legislation to take the wages and benefits out of the pockets of working men and women. Right to work states have lower wages and less employer provided health insurance and pensions resulting in a lower standard of living for all concerned.

We urge the committee for an unfavorable report.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Jeffry Guido

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Mark Ritchey

WARDEN

Ryan Evans

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters Local #423

Subject: House Bill #1321

Date: March 5, 2021

Position: Strongly Oppose

Dear Honorable Delegate Davis and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. I am a 26-year member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Council Representative for the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. I represent Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties. I strongly oppose the "Right to Work Bill" HB #1321. Our members often work for multiple contractors and working under a Collective Bargaining Agreement gives them the ability to have a solid pension plan, provide health insurance for their families and when time to be able to retire with honor and dignity.

"Right to Work" legislation would make it even harder for us to be able to collectively bargain. There have been no proven economic facts to support the idea that this legislation will improve the economy. There are studies however that this legislation does lower wages and decreases the number of people with health insurance.

In ending just want to reiterate that, I strongly oppose HB #1321 and will do everything I can to show opposition to this bill.

Thank You,



Robert L. Reckart

Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters



**Testimony in Opposition to HB 1321
Labor and Employment - Right to Work
March 5, 2021**

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

From: Mr. Courtney Jenkins, President-
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists-
Baltimore Chapter

Dear Chairman Davis and Distinguished Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Baltimore Chapter, I write in **strong opposition** to HB 1321, *Labor and Employment- Right to Work*.

Right to work legislation would do nothing to uplift working families in Maryland. In fact, the term "Right to Work" is a misnomer and does the exact opposite-- as it's intent is to make it harder for working people to bargain for decent wages, good benefits, and safety in the workplace.

Over fifty years ago Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans such as 'right to work.'" Right to work for less laws suppress wages and such legislation is used as a tool; and part of a larger campaign to weaken organized labor and the collective bargaining power of workers.

Dr. King went on to describe right to work laws as "destroy[ing] labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions for everyone...Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer, and there are no civil rights."

This accurate assessment of right to work is still true today. The racist roots of right to work legislation, which originated in 1940's Jim Crow South, has been used to divide workers along

racial lines— making the path to the American dream that much more difficult for generations of black workers and black trade unionists.

Based on a report from the Economic Policy Institute, Black workers in right to work states make on average approximately 11% less in median hourly wages compared to black workers in non right to work states. We must eradicate any right to work roots which attempt to take hold in our great state of Maryland.

For the above reasons, the members of the CBTU Baltimore Chapter **strongly oppose** HB 1321 and urge the committee to vote unfavorably on this bill.

In Solidarity,

Courtney Jenkins, President