

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321  
RIGHT TO WORK  
MARCH 5, 2021

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

From: Jamell A. Thrower, member, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am urging you to oppose House Bill 1321. This so called Right to Work legislation is designed to weaken the rights of workers. The ability to have a safe work place and for workers' right to bargain collectively is essential to maintain a stable path to the middle class in Maryland. This bill will strip Marylanders of these essential rights in the workplace.

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 belonging to Vance Muse, the creator of the "right to work" legislation contains stereotypes and racial slurs that should not be repeated because it is not only offense to me as a black man but it will also offend many on this committee. While this legislation bears no resemblance to this hatred, but the name "Right to Work" will always be associated with these two men. One, a person that has been described as a white supremacist and an anti-Semite and the other a peacemaker who with others fought for Workers' Rights and Nobel Prize Winner.

Now we are left with a bill that is designed to take away your constituents' ability to have workplace representation. Evidence shows that of the 28 states with Right to Work Laws all rank at the bottom of the **Best States to Work Index** ranking. Maryland currently ranks number 12 on this index and I would hate to the General Assembly enact legislation that adversely affect their ranking. We should be working on legislation that protects Workers' Rights, Workplace Safety and raises Maryland standing on the **Best States to Work Index**.

In closing, I ask you once again, stop using that negative label and by all means, oppose HB 1321, today and in the future. Thank you, Jamell A. Thrower, IBEW Member

