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The Honorable Dereck Davis and  
Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

**RE: HB581 - SUPPORT**

As State Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's I am urging your committee to support HB581, " Labor and Employment - Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act)."

We are the largest rail labor union in North America. Our members in Maryland are employees of CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Railway, Amtrak, Bombardier which operates our MARC Service, and the Canton Railroad. They work as conductors, engineers, switchmen, trainmen, utility persons and yardmasters. Our members operate freight and passenger trains that travel throughout the State. Overall, SMART represents over 216,000 members throughout the country.

This proposed legislation would place requirements on essential employers to provide certain benefits and safety and health protections to essential workers during emergency declarations by the Governor.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has denoted that transportation workers are part of the essential structure for critical response.

Our members perform and assist with various functions for shipping and transporting essential goods and materials, including food, pharmaceuticals, raw materials, fuels, chemicals, energy, products for wholesale, as well as the functions and services for transporting passengers via mass transit. This puts them in unavoidable interactions with the general public and places them at the highest risk among the essential workforces.

In the U.S Department of Homeland Security's "Advisory Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During Covid-19 Response" they identify our members as part of the essential critical infrastructure workforce responsible for ensuring community and national resilience in the COVID-19 response.

During this pandemic our members have continued to go to work each day to provide necessary functions to keep our economy working while at the same time providing critical support in the response to the pandemic.

In doing so, many have contracted the COVID 19 virus, which resulted in some of them passing, some becoming very ill and jeopardizing their family's health. Others have had to quarantine for being exposed to other workers or the public who had the virus. Many have lost paychecks and benefits as a result. This legislation addresses many of the hardships these essential workers experienced.

We therefore urge your committee to give HB-581 a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Lawrence E. Kasecamp  
MD State Legislative Director  
 Transportation Division