



UAW REGION 8 MARYLAND STATE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

March 05, 2021

**Testimony in Opposition to HB 1321
“Right-to-Work”**

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

**From: Frederick V. Swanner, President
UAW Maryland State CAP**

I am writing the Chair and all members of the House Economic Matters Committee to urge you to oppose the so called “Right-to-Work” HB 1321, whereas it is a deceptive, outdated policy that will not help working people and will not prepare the state of Maryland for the economic challenges of the 21st century. This law does not create new employee rights and will not help anyone find a job. Instead of helping working families, Right-to-Work laws cut wages and make our workplaces less safe.

Our elected legislators should focus on fixing the problems that prevent businesses from coming here, like high energy costs and not enough workers with the right skills. Right-to-Work will not do that.

In closing I would like to state that my friends, family members, co-workers, and neighbors are hardworking just like you and me and I believe that we need better paying jobs in every part of the state; but passing a Right-to-Work law will not make that happen. It will force more of our skilled workers to leave Maryland to find better jobs with higher wages. So, I urge this committee to oppose the so-called Right-to-Work HB 1321. Thank You

Kind Regards,

**Frederick V. Swanner, President
UAW Maryland State CAP**

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

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Gino Renne, President, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO, Executive Vice President, UFCW International

UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO stands in strong opposition to HB 1321, a so-called “right-to-work” law. Once again, this bill is rearing its ugly head straight from the American Legislative Exchange Council’s (ALEC) playbook. In fact, its text has been mostly lifted from ALEC’s model legislation (with the exception of the exemptions added into the bill that make no sense in light of the recent *Janus* Supreme Court decision).

“Right to work” provides no rights and no work. It’s a partisan political ploy used by extremist groups and their corporate backers looking to undermine the basic rights and legal protections of workers and to weaken their collective bargaining power. If passed, this bill would lower the pay and benefits of workers everywhere and drop everyone in the state of Maryland to a lower living standard.

In addition, this law, which would allow workers in union shops to opt out of paying union dues, would be an illegal taking of union and union members’ property, since federal labor law requires unions to represent all employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, whether they pay dues or not.

Proponents of RTW often speak of workers being “forced” to join a union as a condition of employment. Union membership is voluntary; it is against federal law to force an employee to join a union as a condition of employment. A union member has the freedom to resign his or her membership at any time.

Unions are member organizations, like private clubs, member social organizations, and even the Chamber of Commerce. Elected officers and an elected Executive Board comprised of rank-and-file members govern my local union and most others.

No state that has passed “right to work” has been able to effectively prove that it has attracted jobs and businesses.

“While you may argue that having a job is better than not having a job—no matter how low or unfair the wage paid for that job maybe—right-to-work laws are not designed to do anything to improve the lot of the American worker. At best, they may result in a few low-paying businesses moving into your state...But, in the long run, it is a pretty reasonable bet that all working Americans will suffer as a result.”

—Rick Unger, *Forbes*, 'Right-to-Work' Laws Explained, Debunked and Demystified
12/12/12

UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO represents over 8,000 working men and women in the state of Maryland, we vehemently oppose HB 1321 and we request an unfavorable vote on this bill.



HB 1321

Roxie Herbekian, President

Unite Here Local 7

1800 N. Charles Street, Suite 500

Baltimore, MD 21201

rherbekian@unitehere.org

443-438-5607, ext 5

HB 1321 Oppose Right To Work

House of Delegates Committee on Economic Matters

Friday, March 5, 2021 at 1:30pm

Dear Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais and members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

On behalf of the thousands of UNITE HERE members who live and work in Maryland, I want to thank you for the opportunity to express our organizations opposition to HB 1321. UNITE HERE is a labor union that represents workers in the hospitality industry. This includes hotels, restaurants, event centers, casinos and airport food and retail operations.

My name is Roxie Herbekian. I am the president of UNITE HERE Local 7 based in Baltimore. By unionizing workers and engaging in collective bargaining we have significantly improved the wages, benefits and working conditions for the workers that we represent. Through collective bargaining service workers have won livable wages, affordable health care, pensions and rights. Our theme is that One Job Should Be Enough. This means that Maryland residents should be able to work one job to support themselves and their families and have time to raise their children, participate in civic life and not have to rely of Public Assistance.

Like all organizations we have expenses such as rent, phones, professional services, printing, staff salaries and benefits. Under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRB) when a Union represents a unit of employees, we are legally required to represent ALL of the workers in that unit. By having everyone pay their fair share we are able to keep monthly union dues at a reasonable level and carry out our work. In "Right to Work" states Unions are starved of resources but still have the obligation to represent all of the workers at a given location. As a result, wage rates are lower in "Right to Work States" than they are in "Non-Right to Work States" and employees are less likely to have Employer subsidies health insurance and retirement benefits.

An impoverished workforce strangles communities particularly communities of color. This then serves to strangle the local economy. HB 1321 simply serves to hamper Unions' ability achieve our goal of an economy where workers have decent wages, affordable healthcare and respect in the workplace. HB 1321 serves to keep workers in poverty.

We urge an unfavorable report on HB 1321.