MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Office. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President
Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer
Gerald W. Jackson

HB 350 – Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification
House Economic Matters Committee
January 28, 2021

OPPOSE

Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 350 – Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 350 is yet another attempt to weaken protections for workers and to dilute Earned Sick Leave for working Marylanders. Under current law, workers may use their Earned Sick Leave as they need it and are not subject to capricious demands of verification by a mercurial management. Verification of the use of Earned Sick Leave is based on mutually agreed upon terms between the employer and the employee. HB 350 nullifies that, completely, allowing the employer to unilaterally implement their own verification method and to deny a request for Earned Sick Leave. Moreover, the Fiscal and Policy Note of this identical bill from last Session notes the logical inconsistency in a worker providing "insufficient" verification – after taking the leave – but still allowing an employer to deny it.

The Maryland Health Working Families Act has directly benefited over 700,000 Maryland workers and their families. The law took more than five years to pass, with input from hundreds of stakeholders. It is a law created through compromise, and, as such, should be allowed to stand, as written. There is no reason to create more carve-outs, exemptions, or to dilute this legislation, any further.

We ask for an unfavorable report on HB 350.