



HB 1321

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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.