



Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO

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An AFL-CIO “Union City”

SB 35 – Procurement – Prevailing Wage - Applicability Senate Finance Committee January 28, 2021

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SUPPORT

Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 35 – Procurement – Prevailing Wage - Applicability. On behalf of our 150,000 union members affiliated with the Council throughout metropolitan Washington D.C., we enthusiastically support this bill for its benefit to the State of Maryland and this region.

The hard-working construction workers in the State of Maryland, who are now classified as “essential workers,” deserve the dignity of good pay for the important work that they do, not only at this challenging time, but also into the future. The federal government, many other states, and Washington D.C. all have prevailing wage regulation in place that have shown a positive impact on state finances by increasing state tax revenue and providing other economic and societal benefits to the state, according to the Center for American Progress¹. Their research also shows that prevailing wages yield increased productivity of the better-paid and better-trained workforce and prevent contractors from undermining higher standards that workers get through collective bargaining.

Many of the skilled trade contractors associated with our skilled trade union affiliates are small businesses with 5-10 person shops. They, too, deserve the opportunity to be competitive on these projects. Prevailing wage requires contractors to employ registered apprentices and journey persons that are compensated with fair wages and benefits that include defined pensions and health insurance for themselves and their families. There are many benefits to this law that are good for the people and the economy of Maryland. It is our responsibility to use tax dollars to maintain a good economic standard in the state and pay workers fairly. This bill makes small changes to ensure that continues to happen.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB 35.

In Solidarity,
Dyana Forester

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2020/12/22/494144/prevailing-wages-frequently-asked-questions/>