



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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**HB 492 – Railroad Company – Movement of Freight – Required Crew  
Senate Finance Committee  
March 23, 2021**

**SUPPORT**

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

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB 492 – Railroad Company – Movement of Freight – Required Crew. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

In the work environment, the safety and well-being of our members is of the utmost importance as well as the communities our work impacts. None of us in this room want to be asked why we did not support this commonsense safety legislation if a tragic accident happened, and a second crewmember could have prevented it or mitigated the damages from it.

The thought of a two-mile long freight train operating through our communities with only one person in charge should be frightening to each and every one of you. I am from Cumberland, which has always been a railroad town and has many freight trains that operate on a daily basis, and commuter trains operating twice, daily. I cannot imagine an accident like those highlighted today happening in my hometown, or in nearby mountain communities. Common sense dictates that, for public safety reasons, two persons on the job are better than one.

The argument was put forth – during debate on this legislation on the floor in 2018 – that support testimony was only offered by one labor union. In your packet you have written testimony from many of our affiliates in support of this particularly important rail safety legislation. All of organized labor stands in solidarity with our rail worker brothers and sisters and our communities. We, in the labor movement, know that worker safety cannot be taken for granted, compromised, or given away through the collective bargaining process. As law makers you recognize where the collective bargaining process ends and public policy begins – especially when the safety of workers, the public, and the environment are at stake. To further prove the point that all of labor stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who work in rail transportation, I have attached to this testimony the resolution from our 32<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Convention

in 2019, affirming Labor's unanimous support for the veto override of this previously passed rail safety legislation. It was unfortunate that the override was never passed, but we have an opportunity in this Session, with the passage of HB 492, to finally make rail safety a priority.

The legislature has recognized the importance of this legislation, which was evident with the Senate passing it 33-13 and the House passing it 102-30, during the 2019 Legislative Session. This safety bill is extremely popular and has already been shown to receive wide support in the Maryland General Assembly.

**We ask for a favorable report on HB 492.**

**Resolution #12: In Support of a Veto Override of HB 66 & SB 252 – Required Crew**

**WHEREAS** the safety of the public in regard to the risks associated with the transportation of freight by rail is best served by BOTH implementing new safety technology AND assuring that freight trains continue to be operated by a crew of at least two professionals; and

**WHEREAS** to this end, the Maryland State Legislative Board of the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART), fought for and successfully got passed by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote legislation in the State of Maryland during the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Maryland Legislature requiring freight train crews of at least two persons; and

**WHEREAS** the success in achieving this legislation involved the outstanding support of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO and its affiliates; and

**WHEREAS** this 2018 and 2019 legislation was vetoed by the Governor of Maryland; and

**WHEREAS** the Maryland Constitution prohibited the legislature from overriding the Governor's veto in 2018, but does not prevent the legislature from overriding the 2019 vetoes; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Maryland State & District of Columbia AFL-CIO and its affiliates hereby commit to support the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) and urge the entire Maryland General Assembly to override the Governor's vetoes of HB 66 & SB 252 respectively; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO will provide the entire Maryland General Assembly with a copy of this resolution, upon passage, on the first day of the 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

**Submitted by:** *Larry Kasecamp*  
*Delegate, SMART-TD Local 632*

**Committee: Industrial Safety**

**Convention Action: Unanimously passed**