

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

AFFILIATED WITH:

Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building Trades Council — AFL-CIO
Baltimore Port Council
Baltimore Metro Council — AFL-CIO
Central MD Labor Council — AFL-CIO
Del-Mar-Va Labor Council — AFL-CIO
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Written Testimony of

Rico Albacarys, Assistant Business Manager, IBEW LOCAL 24

Before the

Economic Matters Committee On

HB 977 Prevailing Wage Rate – Public School Construction - Moratorium

Oppose

February 25, 2022

Chairman Wilson and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony in **opposition** of House Bill 977.

My name is Rico Albacarys and I'm an employee and member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 24, in Baltimore.

The work we do is not easy; it requires high skills and has a fair amount of risk. We understand this, which is why we provide extensive training and fight for quality wages, pensions, and health care. We believe everyone doing this type of work is entitled to these wages, regardless of their affiliation with our organization.

Prevailing wage laws require contractors to employ registered apprentices and journeypersons that are compensated with fair wages and fringe benefits, including retirement benefits and health insurance for themselves and their families. Prevailing wages used for school construction projects provide an influx of money into local communities. They provide a means of employment that can keep younger residents from having to leave their communities to find work elsewhere.

Each year, the State conducts surveys to find what the market rate is for each construction trade. This market rate then becomes the “prevailing wage” for each trade. Why would projects funded by Maryland taxpayers have wages lower than the market rate for Maryland workers? Particularly workers who were considered essential just a few months ago. Many industries are realizing workers matter now, more than ever. With a budget surplus and workers across the State struggling to dig out of the pandemic, it seems an odd time to punish construction workers on school projects.

This is why I’m asking you to vote **unfavorably** on HB 977.

Sincerely,



Rico Albacarys

Assistant Business Manager