



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 977 Prevailing Wage Rate-Public School Construction-Moratorium March 1, 2022

To: Hon. C.T. Wilson, Chair, Brian Crosby, Vice Chair and members of the Economic Matters Committee

From: Tom Clark, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, I ask that you join with me and all blue-collar workers in our state and **strongly oppose HB 977**. This bill is a direct shot at not only the wages of the working men and women of Maryland, but a shot at the people themselves, Maryland residents.

Let me begin by defining prevailing wage. It is the wage rate determined by the skill and training involved in a trade, as well as the demand of that skill and the cost of living in that assigned area. It is an average of what workers in the same area, doing the same work, make. Quite simply it is the "Market Rate", what the market demands. Unfortunately, **HB 977** wants to pay Maryland citizens, below the market rate, below the average rate. The sponsors of this bill would like to under pay their constituents. Maybe that could be a campaign slogan. *"I am running for office and I want to pay you less than you are worth, Vote for Me."*

Sadly, paying below the market rate is exclusive to the construction industry. When tax payer dollars are involved: Engineers, Teachers, Janitors, Nurses, Office staff or Social Workers are granted the market rate. However, Electricians, Plumbers, Painters or Carpenters are forced to start the bargaining process, below the market rate. I can only assume that this is some kind of "blue-collar" prejudice. Why do the sponsors or anyone that supports this bill, feel it necessary to pay everyone else the market rate, but insist that people that work with their hands, get paid less? Another campaign slogan: *"I don't care for blue-collar workers, Vote for Me!"*.

May I remind you that IBEW 26 workers, do not cost the State one penny. We are self-funded, we pay for our own healthcare, training and retirement. These self-funding careers have been going on for 130 years. Blue-collar workers are some of the proudest citizens of Maryland, we believe we deserve the "market rate" and your respect. The working people in our state ask that you **oppose HB 977**. Thank you

