



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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## **HB 145 – State Finance and Procurement – Prevailing Wage – Stop Work Orders House Economic Matters Committee January 25, 2022**

### **SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support HB 145 – State Finance and Procurement – Prevailing Wage – Stop Work Orders. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland’s 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 145 provides enforcement and penalty muscle to our Prevailing Wage law by granting the authority to the Commissioner of Labor to issue a stop work order to a public works contractor if, after an investigation, it is found that they violated Prevailing Wage law. Opponents to this bill claim that it is “heavy-handed” and unnecessary because of existing law. If that were true, we would see very few violations throughout the state. Instead, there have been over 500 Prevailing Wage law violations in the last four years. Clearly, the current system is not dissuading irresponsible contractors from continuing to exploit their own workers.

Violating Prevailing Wage law is not a case of a simple “mistake”. It is the willful decision to steal income earned by workers. It has proven to be lucrative when those bad contractors can get away with it. This is intentional, pervasive, and damaging. It needs to end.

Simply putting laws on the books is not enough. It is incumbent to have strong enforcement of our laws. Without adequate enforcement and real penalties, offenders choose to break the law, confident that they will suffer little-to-no consequences for exploiting and stealing from their workers.

**For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 145.**