



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 977 – Prevailing Wage – Public School Construction - Moratorium
House Economic Matters Committee
March 1, 2022**

OPPOSE

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

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 977 – Prevailing Wage – Public School Construction - Moratorium. My name is Donna S. Edwards, President of the Maryland State and DC, AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

This bill is a direct attack not only on the workers who build our schools, but also on the General Assembly. You and your colleagues worked hard on applying prevailing wage to more projects in the state with passage of HB 37 in the 2021 Legislative Session and the in-Session veto override. HB 977 is an attempt to reverse the decision made by the vast majority of the General Assembly to ensure that our tax dollars are invested in a highly skilled workforce to build high-quality public-school buildings.

With a higher paid workforce, we can demand a higher skilled workforce. This will redound to the benefit of not only the workers, but also the taxpayers. With a better trained, highly skilled, and well compensated workforce, Maryland will receive higher quality craftsmanship in our public works. This will reduce future maintenance costs, as well as project overruns due to fixing initially shoddy workmanship. And, with a greater influx of revenue into the SATF, we can provide more resources to training the next generation of skilled tradesmen and women. Moreover, construction workers have been deemed as “essential workers” during the COVID-19 pandemic, and, therefore, deserve the respect and appreciation that we can provide for them through better wages through expanding Prevailing Wage.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on HB 977.