



The Honorable CT Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building Room 231
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 15, 2022

**HB 640 – Labor and Employment - Healthy Working Families Act - Application
Position – Favorable**

Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 640. My name is Steve Lanning. I am the Assistant Business Manager of Laborers' Local 11, an affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America, or LiUNA for short. Local 11, combined with our sister Local 710 out of Baltimore, represent more than 4,000 construction laborers who live and work in Maryland. You see us everyday working on our region's infrastructure projects, including the Purple Line and BGE gas pipeline replacement projects.

LiUNA members support HB 640.

Currently, the Healthy Working Families Act allows construction workers who work under a collective bargaining agreement, or CBA, to waive the requirements of the Maryland earned sick and safe leave law.

HB 640 seeks to remove that exemption ONLY for construction laborers. The bill does not affect any other provision of the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act.

To be clear, the laborer position is a distinct construction craft. For example, other types of construction crafts include carpenters, electricians, and plumbers, to name a few.

Generally, laborers are the lowest paid craft among construction workers. The laborer position is often viewed as an entry level and easier to replace compared with skilled crafts like electricians or elevator mechanics. Consequently, from the very outset laborers are disadvantaged during their CBA negotiations with contractors.

And when you bargain, you are expected to give something up in exchange for something else. LiUNA strongly believes that sick leave should not be on the negotiating table for laborers during CBA discussions. The potential for sick leave to be taken away from a laborer – typically the lowest paid position on a job site – during collective bargaining negotiations is bad public policy, especially during a pandemic.

On behalf of our members, please issue a favorable report on HB 640.