



## TESTIMONY

### HB 145 / SB1 - STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT – PREVAILING WAGE – STOP WORK ORDERS

#### FAVORABLE

To: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and honorable members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: Carl Neimeyer, President, Bernward Mechanical and Construction Solutions

On behalf of Bernward Mechanical and Construction Solutions and the 52 skilled union tradesmen we employ in the State of Maryland, I am writing today in support of HB145. This bill is an important tool in fighting against fraudulent contractors and providing all workers a fair wage in the state procurement system.

I started this Maryland based Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business in 2016 with a strong mission to provide every worker with a just wage, the tools and training to do their job, and health and retirement benefits befitting the dignity of the middle class worker. As a result, we contend daily with losing jobs to companies who do not share our standards and ethics. This bill as written will provide the state with strong enforcement action to ensure that the wage due to the worker is paid, eliminate low road companies from competition, and bolster the workforce with well compensated, trained, and skilled workers in a time when they are in short supply.

One of our greatest challenges for our business is competing against companies that choose profits over ethics. We have elected on several occasions to decline bidding state work due to our knowledge that our non-union competition engages in worker misclassification and other unfair practices to give them a significant pricing edge over us. This practice must be brought to a stop. Giving the state the simple and effective enforcement actions laid out in this bill and already in force in New Jersey will immediately and rightfully impact those contractors exploiting their workers and taking part in illegal misclassification. Further, this will put these contractors on notice that illegal practices will no longer be tolerated and that they can no longer steal work from ethical contractors.

I implore you to take this important first step in ending wage theft and leveling the playing field for legitimate contractors in the State of Maryland. I hope that you share my goal to provide your constituents and resident businesses protection from those companies who seek to turn profit on the backs of the worker rather than build value in partnership with their workers. For these reasons, I ask for a favorable committee report on HB145.

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