

TESTIMONY – HB145 / SB1 - STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT - PREVAILING  
WAGE - STOP WORK ORDERS

KUNTA KENTE BEDNEY

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, committee members and guests. My name is Kunta Bedney and I am a Council Representative with the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. I service the DMV area (DC, PG County, Charles County, Montgomery County, and Northern Virginia). I am here in support of the “Prevailing Wage - Stop Work Order Bill.”

I would like to start by sharing my life story and why this bill is so important to people like me. I had a rough childhood growing up. My Mom served ten years in prison and my Dad was killed in Lorton Prison in Lorton, Virginia. My great aunt raised me and she did her best to keep me out of trouble but trouble found me. I dropped out of high school in the 11th grade and started running the streets. I was arrested and had eighteen months to think about my life. When I came home, I went to a pre-apprenticeship program that allowed me to earn a GED and a pre-apprenticeship certificate in construction. I enrolled in the Carpenters apprenticeship program, worked my way up from an apprentice, to a journeyman, then to a foreman and now I am a Council Representative. It's important that these programs continue to thrive in low income areas and continue to help people that need second chances to change their lives from poverty to the middle class. I am proud to say today that I'm a father of six children, engaged to be married, and a productive citizen, all of which I learned from professional men and women in the Carpenters Union.

This bill stops unscrupulous contractors from being bad actors in the construction industry. If contractors aren't breaking the law they have nothing to worry about. This legislation ensures that workers like me are paid the wages and benefits to which we are entitled and have earned under the law.

Thank you for your time and I ask for a favorable committee report.