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## Senate Bill 23

Date: 1/26/2023  
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Bill Title: Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning, and Refrigeration Services - Journeyman License - Qualifications  
Re: Letter of Support

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The Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) houses the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensng, which licenses the HVAC industry, as well as the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), which is the state’s designated Registered Apprenticeship entity. MDL views SB 23 as a favorable bill that will simultaneously strengthen the skills of Maryland workers, provide a more prepared workforce for employers, and in turn better serve Maryland consumers.

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid On-The-Job Learning with Related Instruction to progressively increase workers’ skill levels and wages. Registered Apprenticeship is business-driven and provides an effective way for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. It allows employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs, thereby increasing productivity and the quality of the workforce. As an “earn and learn” strategy, Registered Apprenticeship offers job seekers immediate employment opportunities that provide sustainable wages and advancement along a career pathway. Graduates of Registered Apprenticeship programs receive nationally recognized, portable credentials, and their training may be applied towards further post-secondary education.

In Registered Apprenticeship, a HVACR apprentice must work 8,000 hours on the job AND attend 576 hours of schooling (Related Instruction) in order to graduate and receive their journeyworker license. These requirements ensure that graduates are highly skilled AND are educated in their occupation.

Individuals who are currently in the HVACR industry via non-Registered Apprenticeships are able to take their licensing exam with a low number of hours spent training on the job (1875 vs. 8000). By increasing the number of years needed to hold an apprentice license from 3 to 4 and the number of training hours needed from 1,875 to 6,000, the bill more closely aligns the licensing requirements with those of the Registered Apprenticeship system. Because SB 23 will make entering the HVACR field via non-Registered Apprenticeship models similar to entering via Registered Apprenticeship, DWDAL anticipates there will be an increase in the number of new Registered Apprentices, creating more opportunities for Maryland residents to receive skilled training and education.

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Additionally, Apprentices who graduate from an approved Registered Apprenticeship program receive their journeyworker license without an exam. Those who do not go through a Registered Apprenticeship program have a significant rate of non-passing. Therefore, if more individuals take the Registered Apprenticeship approach to getting their journeyworker license, SB 23 may also increase the total number of HVACR journeyworkers throughout the State.