



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 413:**  
**Apprenticeship 2030 Commission**

TO: Chair Melony Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Ioana Stoica, Policy Advocate

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The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland. **We support Senate Bill 413 as a means of expanding access to apprenticeship programs and vocational training as alternative pathways to job security and employment.**

Employment in the skilled trades is growing: the ten year projected growth for electricians is 14%, for plumbers is 12%, and for carpenters is 6%. These professions provide good wages and oftentimes benefits that are able to support individuals and their families. In Maryland, on average, wages are \$31.97 per hour for master electricians, \$32.70 for plumbers, and \$24.17 for carpenters - well above the minimum wage.

According to the National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis, approximately 24% of Marylanders overall have a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment. Apprenticeships provide employment opportunities throughout Maryland, and create a pathway to higher wage work for those without a college degree. Too many Marylanders are still struggling to secure full-time employment and build economic security after the Great Recession. With the growing demand for highly-skilled workers in the labor force, education and apprenticeships are one of the surest ways to build economic security for people living in or near poverty.

JOTF supports the way that Senate Bill 413 addresses the issue of labor shortages: first, by expanding registered apprenticeships in industry sectors with skill shortages while focusing on the largest sectors, and working directly with members of employer and labor communities to identify these needs; second, by aligning the work with the Kirwin Blueprint goals for secondary school students; and third, by collecting data and providing a plan for increasing apprenticeships to a specific goal, and for proposing further policy changes that will help Maryland attain these goals.

The work undertaken by the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission as written in this bill will allow for policy changes that will lead Marylanders to building economic security. Investing in the careers of these individuals is not only an investment in their futures, but also the State's economy. For these reasons, **we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 413.**

**For more information, contact:**

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