



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
JOSEPH F. DABBS: Business Manager • THOMAS C. MYERS: President • RICHARD D. WILKINSON: Vice President
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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 650
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT-APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS-RATIO OF
APPRENTICES TO JOURNEYPERSONS
February 21, 2024

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Tom Clark, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, members of the House Economic Matters Committee. I cannot see the purpose of this bill, other than to lower wages of entry level personnel, by inserting the title, “apprenticeship” in their trade. Please join me in complete **opposition to HB 650**.

I am skeptical of any bill that uses the word apprenticeship and does not speak on classroom hours or job placement. Once again, my belief is that HB 650 seeks low wages for individuals, without proper training or career opportunities. The Department of labor defines apprenticeship as:

Apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction to prepare workers for highly skilled careers. Workers benefit from apprenticeships by receiving a skills-based education that prepares them for good-paying jobs.

Not only does HB 650 exclude classroom instruction, but it also refers to nontraditional trade occupations, which could be considered not “highly skilled”. I would also take exception to the list of non-traditional trade occupations. **(3) Building Automation Technician** is work performed by electricians. **(4) Cabinetmaker** is a carpenter. **(26) Wastewater Treatment Technician and (27) Water Pumping Technician** are Plumbers. I would also find it hard to believe you would not have on-the-job training accompanied by classroom instruction for: **(6) Computer Programmer (8) Cybersecurity Specialist** or **(14) Financial Specialist**. As I stated before, this piece of legislation seeks to lower the wages of individuals and exploit them by calling this program an apprenticeship.

Even the ratio of apprentice to journeyman reeks of worker exploitation. In the “traditional” or “highly skilled” trades, the ratio is: Maryland 1 journeyman to 1 apprentice. In the District and Virginia, it is 3 journeymen to 2 apprentices. And although in these traditional trades, safety is a factor, the idea of HB 650 asking for 3 apprentices to one journeyman is ridiculous and can only benefit the employer.

In conclusion, HB 650 is not a wolf in sheep’s clothing, it’s a wolf in its own clothing, and not fooling anyone. This is working exploitation and does not train anyone for the future. If the





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author of this Bill and the business community would like to lower wages of Maryland citizens, do so, but do not try to use the word apprenticeship to mask your goal. I cannot stress this enough, if you do not include classroom hours, along with on-the-job training, it is **not** an apprenticeship. If you do not have job placement (not specific to a company, but to the occupation) it is **not** an apprenticeship. The terms of **HB 650** are **not** an apprenticeship, so I ask you to protect the working people of Maryland and protect the Registered apprenticeship programs in our state. Most importantly vote **unfavorably on HB 650**. Thank you!

