



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 669 - Workers' Compensation - Benefits - Hearing Loss
House Economic Matters Committee
February 21, 2024**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 669. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 669 modifies the state's process for determining hearing loss for the purposes of workers compensation and adds tinnitus to the eligible types of hearing loss claims. HB 669 builds off the progress made by 2023's CH 410 - Workers' Compensation - Benefits - Offset and Study, which narrowed the application of disability benefits offsets that prevented workers from collecting injury compensation. Last year's original bill included provisions that proposed expanding the eligibility of workers to collect injury compensation for hearing loss caused by industrial noise, but legislative efforts chose to focus on offset issues in the workers compensation system. These original hearing loss provisions are brought back in this standalone bill.

Workers deserve safe working conditions, including protections from loud noises that can cause hearing loss and tinnitus. When those work related injuries impede the ability of that worker to function, they deserve compensation. Tinnitus clearly damages hearing ability and should be covered in the same manner as traditional hearing loss claims.

We urge a favorable report on HB 669.