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**SB 846 - Maryland Department of Labor – Unemployment Insurance – Study on Actively Seeking Work Requirements
Senate Finance Committee
March 5, 2024**

OPPOSE

**Donna S. Edwards
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Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 846 as currently written. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 300,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

SB 846 requires the Maryland Department of Labor to study the actively seeking work requirements for workers on unemployment insurance and make recommendations on proposals to address problems with job applicants “ghosting” employers. Ghosting, a term originally used in dating and relationships to refer to suddenly cutting off all communications with the other party without providing an explanation, has now been commandeered by employers to refer to the practice of job applicants abruptly not responding to further job inquiries or showing up to interviews.

Despite the over decade old practice of employers commonly not even sending acknowledgements that they received job applications, following up after interviews, or letting applicants know that they filled the position, some employers view the recent trend of employees not responding that they may have found better employment elsewhere as an affront. In fact, the first uses of ghosting regarding employment was about employers not responding to job applicants after interviews.¹ Even more egregious is the common practice of employers to post “ghost jobs,” which are positions that companies posting hiring announcements for with no intention to fill or hire for.² Modern job applicants are expected to be able to keep themselves aware of which job postings are real and fake, maintain availability for potentially multiple rounds of interviews, all while having limited access to information about what the position may actually expect or provide.

In the recent low-unemployment rate economy workers have more options for positions with better pay, benefits, and quality of life. Employers must respond to this labor market by offering competitive compensation and straightforward hiring processes without unnecessary obstacles. Being up front and

¹ J.T. O'Donnell, “‘Ghosted’ after a job interview? Here’s a sample follow-up email—and what to do if you still don’t hear back.” CNBC. May 18, 2021.

² Kristin Schwab. “Those jobs you’re applying to? They might not be real.” Marketplace. January 3, 2024.

transparent about future job information is what Monster reports young Gen-Z workers are looking for. The 2024 Monster survey found that 31% of job applicants that ghosted an employer claimed, “The recruiter or hiring manager was rude or lied to me about the position.” Monster also found that “77 percent of applicants believe there’s a correlation between how they are treated as job applicants and how they would likely be treated on the job.”

There is no body of evidence that ghosting is somehow connected with work search requirements for job applicants on unemployment insurance. SB 846 makes the false conflation between ghosting and applicants trying to work around the state’s work search requirements. The number of job applicants that are currently employed outnumbers the number of job applicants that are unemployed.

Despite this bill’s misguided construction, Maryland should study work search requirements in order to get rid of them. Work search requirements encourage unemployment insurance beneficiaries to accept positions that may be poor fits for their skill sets and experience. Maryland should focus on removing its work search requirements, rather than constructing complicated systems to catch alleged ghosting fraud that is unproven to be connected to unemployment insurance in the first place.

We urge an unfavorable report on SB 846.