

VANESSA PENA  
5425 55TH PL APT 301  
RIVERDALE, MD 20737  
(832) 236-2964  
VPENA140377@GMAIL.COM

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House of Delegates Health and Government Operations Committee  
Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk Chair  
Bonnie Cullison Vice Chair  
Room 241 House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Endorsement of the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act - HB 1276

Dear Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony of support for HB 1276. My name is Vanessa Pena, and I am writing to express my support for the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act. As an apprentice currently enrolled in the Glazing Program at the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, I believe that this legislation holds the key to shaping a brighter future for apprentices like myself and the entire construction workforce in Maryland.

Being part of the apprenticeship program has been a transformative experience for me. It has provided not only a structured learning environment but also invaluable hands-on experience that is shaping me into a skilled professional. The Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act HB 1276 aligns with my journey and those of my fellow apprentices, addressing critical aspects that can enhance and advance the apprenticeship experience and contribute to the overall prosperity of our state.

This legislation emphasizes diversity and inclusion within the construction industry, providing opportunities for individuals like me who may have faced barriers in the past. It creates a more accessible pathway for women, minorities, and individuals from different backgrounds to enter and thrive in the construction trades.

The Act's commitment to a specified percentage of hours utilized on a project ensures that apprentices get the opportunity for hands-on training that they deserve. It emphasizes the importance of our training, acknowledging that apprenticeships are not only a means to an end but a crucial stepping stone toward a fulfilling and lasting career in the construction industry.

As someone just starting their career, job security is of utmost importance. The Act's focus on apprenticeship utilization not only secures our present opportunities but also ensures a thriving workforce for years to come. By investing in apprenticeships, we contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of the construction industry in Maryland.

Apprentices like me are not just workers; we are members of the community actively involved in building and shaping our surroundings. The Act's emphasis on apprenticeship utilization not only strengthens the construction industry but also contributes to community development, creating a positive ripple effect on local economies.

My experience as an apprentice has been marked not only by skill development but also personal growth. The Act reinforces the importance of our roles, encouraging a sense of commitment and professionalism that extends beyond our apprenticeship period. It sets the stage for a fulfilling and promising career in the construction trades.

I want to express my gratitude for the foresight and dedication behind the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act. As an apprentice, I endorse this legislation, believing that it will not only positively impact my journey but also contribute to the overall success and vitality of the construction industry in our great state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.