



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

HB 37 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Organize House Appropriations Committee January 28, 2025

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 37 to give every person employed in the state of Maryland the right to organize and collectively bargain. 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.

The right to join together in unions is protected by the U.S. constitution. The First Amendment of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of speech, assembly, and petition, also guarantees freedom of association and is recognized by U.S. courts as a fundamental right.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) grants most private-sector employees the right to form or join unions to advocate for better wages, working conditions and benefits among other workplace improvements. While the NLRA covers most private-sector employees, it does not cover other government employees such as agricultural workers, domestic workers, independent contractors or supervisors.

We support HB 37 expanding this essential right to *all* workers in the state of Maryland.

Workers in our state deserve the freedom to advocate for themselves without fear of repercussions. Our state is better when our workers' voices are heard, valued, and uplifted. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 37.