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**TESTIMONY ON HB#/0037- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Declaration of Rights - Right to Organize**

**TO:** Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0037, Declaration of Rights - Right to Organize**

With the Federal Government now hostile to unions and worker's rights it is incumbent on states, like Maryland, to take proactive measures to protect the right to organize. The 118<sup>th</sup> United State Congress saw the introduction of **H.R.20 - Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2023**.<sup>1</sup> The Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or [PRO Act](#), would significantly change the landscape of unionization, strengthen protections and the bargaining position of workers, and create a better balance in the employer-employee relationship. But as it currently stands, the PRO Act's sponsors were unable to advance the bill beyond the 60-vote threshold needed to defeat a Senate filibuster while the Democratic Party controlled the Senate. The bill faced opposition from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Republican Party, it is now a dead bill with the government in Republican control.

Maryland can and should lead the way to create and establish a right to join and be represented in a union. This bill will establish and make clear that every person employed in the State of Maryland has the fundamental right to organize and collectively bargain concerning compensation, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. It will act to prohibit the State from, directly or indirectly, denying, burdening, or abridging the right unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means. This policy shall be brought to the voters by providing that the Constitutional amendment proposed by the Act be submitted to the qualified voters of the State for adoption or rejection. A critical issue like this deserves a full and fair debate in the public to provide the information for an informed decision by the citizenry regarding it's implementation or rejection.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0037.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/20>