



TESTIMONY FOR HB0037

Declaration of Rights - Right to Organize

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Vogel

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Shore Progress

Person Submitting: Jared Schablein, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0037 on behalf of Shore Progress. Shore Progress (formerly LSPC) is a nonpartisan civic organization covering the Eastern Shore of Maryland. We are committed to building strong communities across the Eastern Shore by building the Progressive movement.

We enthusiastically support the passage of this legislation, which establishes the fundamental right of every person employed in Maryland to organize and collectively bargain. This right is essential for ensuring fair and equitable treatment in the workplace and empowering workers to have a voice in decisions that directly impact their livelihoods. By enshrining this right in the Maryland Declaration of Rights, the legislation achieves several key objectives:

Empowering Workers: The ability to organize and collectively bargain is essential to addressing power imbalances between employees and employers. Workers deserve the right to advocate for fair compensation, reasonable hours, and safe working conditions.

Economic Justice: Collective bargaining has been shown to improve wages, reduce income inequality, and strengthen economic mobility, particularly for women and marginalized communities. This bill represents a significant step toward ensuring that Maryland's workforce can thrive.

Protecting Fundamental Freedoms: This legislation guarantees that the State cannot deny, burden, or abridge the right to organize unless a compelling State interest is demonstrated using the least restrictive means. This ensures that this right is robustly protected while maintaining flexibility for essential government interests.

As an organization committed to fostering equity and economic opportunity across the Eastern Shore and the rest of Maryland, Shore Progress views this bill as a transformative and overdue recognition of workers' critical role in shaping our state's prosperity. By supporting this legislation, Maryland is taking an essential step toward ensuring dignity, fairness, and justice for all employees.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.