



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 37: Declaration of Rights - Right to Organize**

Appropriations Committee

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 - 1:00PM

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Unions make Maryland's economy stronger. Workers in a union earn higher wages and receive better benefits. Higher wages lead to increases in household incomes, giving families greater economic stability. Unions reduce wealth inequality – as in the United States, a typical union household is 1.7 times as wealthy as a typical nonunion household. When workers are unionized, working conditions are better – keeping workers healthier and safer.

HB37 proposes an amendment to the Maryland State Constitution which would establish that every person employed in the State of Maryland has the fundamental right to organize, form a union, and bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions.

By constitutionally affirming the right to organize, we would open up pathways to unionization for more Maryland workers while offering fundamental protections to workers who choose to unionize. Once this amendment is enshrined in Maryland's constitution – efforts to bust unions will be unconstitutional in the State of Maryland.

The idea to enshrine the right to organize in a state's constitution is not new. Three years ago, Illinois passed the Worker's Rights Amendment, enshrining similar language in their constitution. Illinois voters approved the constitutional amendment in the 2022 election with 54.5% of the vote, sending a strong message of support for the right to form a union and collectively bargain.

Over the last four years, unions and workers had strong support from the federal government. There has been growing bipartisan support for the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act within Congress to advance the legislation. In a moment of uncertainty, Maryland has the opportunity to send a clear message to the nation. Maryland is a pro-union, pro-worker state – where every worker has the constitutional right to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively.

**I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB 37.**