

*Jan. 28, 2025*

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Zack Frink, and I'm a union organizer with UFCW union. That's the United Food and Commercial Workers union. We represent workers in grocery, retail, food service, health care, cannabis, and numerous other industries.

I'm here today to express my strong support for HB0037, the Right to Organize bill. Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand how the ability to organize and negotiate has improved not just wages but the overall quality of life for countless workers — including myself. The right to collective bargaining has given me financial stability, better healthcare, and a voice on the job. Every worker in Maryland deserves that same opportunity.

When workers are denied the right to organize, they lose out on tens of thousands of dollars in wages and benefits. That money could go toward supporting their families, buying a home, or securing a dignified retirement. Meanwhile, businesses already organize and bargain every day. That can be through chambers of commerce, trade associations, or negotiations with suppliers and landlords. Workers deserve the same rights as the companies they work for.

Some may argue that this bill will hurt businesses. The reality is that strong unions create better workplaces. Studies show that unionized workplaces have lower turnover, better safety records, and higher productivity. When workers have a seat at the table, everyone benefits. When Maryland workers organize, it doesn't just improve their own workplaces — it raises standards across industries, strengthens communities, and builds a fairer economy for all.

I urge you to support this bill and ensure that every worker in Maryland has the right to stand together and negotiate for a better future. Thank you, and I welcome any questions.

– Zack Frink