



Eastern Atlantic States
REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

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TESTIMONY

**MUNGU SANCHEZ OF THE EASTERN ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL
OF CARPENTERS**

**BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS
COMMITTEE**

**REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INVESTMENTS FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY
(RAISE) ACT (HB 501 / SB 431)**

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Chairs Beidle and Wilson, and Members of the Committees,

The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters proudly represents thousands of skilled union carpenters across Maryland. Our members are the backbone of the construction industry, performing essential work that includes building and repairing structures like walls, floors, and doorframes; installing fixtures like windows, molding, and hardware; constructing concrete forms and pouring concrete; framing walls with wood and steel; erecting scaffolding and ladders; finishing surfaces like woodwork and wallboard; inspecting and replacing damaged structures; and directing laborers and other construction helpers. These tasks are not just critical to the built environment but require years of training, experience, and on-the-job mentorship to ensure safety, efficiency, and craftsmanship.

Registered apprenticeships are the foundation of the carpentry trade, ensuring that new generations of workers are trained properly and placed on a path to family-sustaining careers. The RAISE Act (HB 501 / SB 431) seeks to strengthen Maryland's apprenticeship system, a goal we support. However, for this bill to be most effective, several key amendments are needed to ensure that it truly benefits workers and responsible contractors without adding unnecessary bureaucracy or redundancies.

One area for improvement is data collection under Section 11-405. While the bill requires reporting on apprenticeship participation, it should go further to track long-term workforce outcomes, such as wage progression, job placement, retention rates, and career advancement. Carpenters invest years in their training, developing specialized skills in areas like concrete formwork, pile driving, framing, and finish carpentry. Without data tracking long-term career success, the state cannot accurately measure whether these apprenticeship programs are providing real career opportunities or just short-term placements.

Another major concern is the creation of the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD) in Section 11-409. While the goal of enhancing apprenticeship opportunities is commendable, establishing a separate office within the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) creates unnecessary administrative layers. Instead of forming a new office, Maryland should invest in expanding staffing and resources within MATP's existing structure to ensure that efforts to improve apprenticeship access remain streamlined and effective.

Similarly, the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program in Section 11-410 presents concerns about redundancy. Federal regulations already allow for industry intermediaries and apprenticeship facilitators, making it unclear why Maryland needs to duplicate these efforts at the state level. If this provision remains, it should clearly define eligibility criteria for intermediaries, specify whether out-of-state entities may participate, and clarify whether these intermediaries may also serve as registered apprenticeship sponsors. Transparency and accountability in workforce development are critical to ensuring these programs serve Maryland workers rather than outside interests.

A key aspect of strengthening the apprenticeship system is ensuring that employers who receive incentives under Section 11-607 commit to retaining apprentices throughout their full training period. The bill, as written, limits incentives to newly registered apprentices, but this language is too vague. Apprenticeship incentives should support sustained employment and career development, not just enrollment numbers. By requiring participating employers to retain apprentices through the completion of their training—unless there is just cause for dismissal—Maryland can ensure that these programs are preparing workers for stable, long-term employment.

Carpenters in Maryland play a fundamental role in construction, from erecting scaffolding and forming concrete foundations to installing detailed millwork and directing teams on job sites. A well-structured apprenticeship system ensures that they have the skills and knowledge to work safely, advance in their careers, and contribute to the state's economy for decades to come. The RAISE Act has the potential to enhance this system, but only if it is amended to focus on real career pathways, avoid bureaucratic redundancies, and ensure accountability in workforce development programs.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on HB 501 / SB 431 with the recommended amendments. Thank you for your time and commitment to strengthening Maryland's workforce.

Sincerely,
Mungu Sanchez
Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters

**EASTERN ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HB 501 / SB 431**

AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 11-405 – DATA COLLECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(1) Amend Section 11-405(d) as follows:

- Expand reporting requirements to include wage progression, job placement rates, retention statistics, and career advancement data for at least five years following apprenticeship completion.
- Require the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning to publish this expanded dataset annually to measure program effectiveness and workforce retention outcomes.

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 11-409 – MARYLAND OFFICE OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP DEVELOPMENT (MORAD)

(2) Strike and replace Section 11-409 as follows:

- Remove the establishment of a separate Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD).
- Instead, expand staff and resources within the existing Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) to meet the objectives outlined in this section without creating a redundant administrative entity.
- Require MATP to report annually on the effectiveness of its expanded workforce outreach initiatives.

AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 11-410 – REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP QUALIFIED INTERMEDIARY PROGRAM

(3) Modify Section 11-410 as follows:

- Clearly define "Qualified Intermediary" to specify eligibility criteria and determine whether out-of-state entities may qualify.
- Replace "Apprenticeship Program Participants" with "Potential Apprentices" in subsection (4)(I) to reflect the intended role of outreach and recruitment.

- Define whether intermediaries may also serve as registered apprenticeship sponsors and clarify their inclusion or exclusion under Section 11-607.

AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 11-607 – APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM

(4) Strengthen employer retention requirements in Section 11-607(f)(4) as follows:

- Employers receiving incentives must commit to retaining apprentices throughout the full apprenticeship period and beyond, unless the apprentice voluntarily leaves or is dismissed for cause.
- Clarify that state-funded incentives should prioritize long-term workforce development and career retention rather than short-term enrollment numbers.

FOCUS ON CARPENTRY AND CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

(5) Incorporate provisions to ensure apprenticeship opportunities and funding are directed toward high-demand sectors, including carpentry and construction trades.

- Require workforce development efforts to prioritize training in key carpentry and construction trades, including:
 - Building and repairing structures (walls, floors, doorframes).
 - Installing fixtures (windows, molding, hardware).
 - Constructing concrete forms and pouring concrete.
 - Framing walls (wood and steel).
 - Erecting scaffolding and ladders.
 - Finishing surfaces (woodwork, wallboard).
 - Inspecting and replacing damaged structures.
 - Directing laborers and construction helpers.
- Ensure apprenticeship incentive funding supports these scopes of work by requiring a minimum percentage of grant allocations to be directed toward programs supporting construction trades and skilled labor.