



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

JOSEPH F. DABBS: Business Manager • THOMAS C. MYERS: President • RICHARD D. WILKINSON: Vice President
CHRISTOPHER M. CASH: Financial Secretary • RICHARD G. MURPHY: Recording Secretary • WILLIAM T. NG: Treasurer



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of HB 554 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE MODERNIZATION ACT of 2025 February 26, 2025

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Tom Clark, Political Director, Int. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the Committee, President Kennedy once said, “The time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining.” This quote is apropos to the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act, since work is currently plentiful. Let’s make the overdue adjustments now, before it is needed to help our citizens in between jobs. For this reason, I ask that you **support HB 554**.

HB 554 updates the formula of calculating UI as well as the amount received by Marylanders. While work is plentiful, this adjustment to the formula puts the state and its businesses in a good place, simply because the SUTA will not increase due to layoffs. The only adjustment is the SUTA for payroll. While working people are in full employment, they will have up to date benefits, if they unfortunately lose their jobs.

IBEW 26, like all construction groups, use UI benefits more than most industries because construction workers are not overhead, they are production. Let me explain; if a contractor employs 10 workers and there suddenly is work for only 8, the employer may lay off 2 people, even though in one week there is work for 12 people. Those 80 manhours increase the bottom-line for Maryland construction companies. It’s a tough life we construction workers lead, as well as those contractors who regretfully must make such tough decisions. One bright spot is that since 2015, IBEW 26 has full employment (mostly due to the Data Center Industries) and has not been a burden on the States UI benefits. I hope full employment continues, however, lets prepare to make the UI system healthy, before we do need such benefits. In fact, because of the recent Federal Government shakeup, Maryland may need to act now to help these once gainfully employed government workers.

I respectfully ask you to **support HB 554** for the good of Maryland workers and while the sun is still shining. Thank you.





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