



Testimony of Aaron Bast, Business Manager and Financial Secretary Treasurer

Iron Workers Local 5

In Support of HB264 / SB218

House Economic Matters Committee and Senate Finance Committee

Chairs Wilson and Beidle, and honorary Members of the House Economic Matters Committee and Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of Iron Workers Local 5, I am honored to provide strong support for House Bill 264 / Senate Bill 218. This critical legislation directly addresses workplace fraud, an issue that undermines both the integrity of our industry and the well-being of Maryland's hardworking men and women. As representatives of highly skilled union iron workers, we know how essential it is to hold bad actors accountable and ensure fair treatment for all workers.

Our members dedicate themselves to building the infrastructure that powers Maryland's economy. They work in challenging conditions, delivering excellence through their skill and professionalism. Unfortunately, some contractors cut corners by engaging in fraudulent practices, such as misclassifying workers as independent contractors. This not only denies workers essential rights and benefits but also undercuts responsible employers who follow the rules, creating an uneven playing field in our industry.

House Bill 264 / Senate Bill 218 is a decisive step toward leveling that playing field. By requiring the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to notify licensing authorities when a licensee is found in violation of workplace fraud provisions, this legislation ensures that violations are met with meaningful consequences. The suspension or revocation of licenses for repeat offenders sends a clear message: Maryland will not tolerate workplace fraud. At the same time, the inclusion of a transparent and fair appeals process ensures due process, balancing accountability with fairness.

For union workers, this bill is more than policy—it is a promise that Maryland values their contributions and is committed to protecting their rights. Fraudulent practices like misclassification strip workers of protections such as healthcare, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance. These practices also weaken the labor standards that unions have fought to uphold for generations. By addressing these

abuses, HB264 reinforces the principle that all workers deserve dignity, respect, and fair treatment on the job.

This legislation also protects responsible contractors who play by the rules. Companies that properly classify their employees and invest in their workforce should not be forced to compete against those who evade their obligations. HB264 ensures that ethical contractors can thrive in a fair and competitive market, ultimately strengthening Maryland's economy.

The ironworking trade is built on principles of safety, fairness, and respect for skilled labor. HB264 aligns with these values by prioritizing the well-being of workers and ensuring that Maryland's labor laws are enforced effectively. It is a necessary step toward building an industry and a state where fairness and accountability prevail.

Iron Workers Local 5 urges this Committee to give HB264 / SB218 a favorable report. By passing this bill, you will demonstrate Maryland's commitment to supporting its workers, protecting its contractors, and fostering an economy built on integrity and respect. We thank Governor Moore and Secretary Wu for introducing this legislation and the Committee for considering its importance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Bast
Business Manager and Financial Secretary Treasurer
Iron Workers Local 5