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Patrick Moran – President

**HB1096 – Fraud Prevention and Worker Protections –
Prohibitions, Penalties, and Enforcement
Economic Matters Committee
February 26, 2025**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports House Bill 1096. This legislation aims to strengthen the authority of the Office of the Attorney General to promote fair labor practices throughout Maryland's economy by establishing a Worker Protection Unit. The Unit would be charged with investigating and prosecuting violations of Workers' Rights Laws as specified in the bill. The bill provides the OAG's new unit with a full-time chief counsel and additional staff to carry out the functions and mission of the new Worker Protection Unit.

AFSCME Council 3 represents approximately 45,000 public service workers across the state, county, and municipal levels of government. AFSCME members are on the front lines every day delivering critical public services from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, without the work of AFSCME members, our communities could not function.

AFSCME Council 3 supports this legislation to promote fair labor practices in industries where abuse of workplace laws is far too common. Other state and local government jurisdictions have taken affirmative steps in recent years to combat various forms of workplace violations including wage theft, prevailing wage violations, employee misclassification, and more.¹ Our union supports similar efforts in Maryland to ensure all workers are treated with dignity and respect in their workplace.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report of House Bill 1096.

¹ Terri Gerstein, *How district attorneys and state attorneys general are fighting workplace abuses* (May 17, 2021), [https://www.epi.org/publication/fighting-workplace-abuses-criminal-prosecutions-of-wage-theft-and-other-employer-crimes-against-workers/#:~:text=In%20several%20jurisdictions%2C%20state%20attorneys,against%20workers%20\(Gerstein%202020\).](https://www.epi.org/publication/fighting-workplace-abuses-criminal-prosecutions-of-wage-theft-and-other-employer-crimes-against-workers/#:~:text=In%20several%20jurisdictions%2C%20state%20attorneys,against%20workers%20(Gerstein%202020).)