



PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS

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To: Chairman C. T. Wilson, Vice Chair Brian M. Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee

From: Christopher Anderson, Business Agent, Plumbers and Steamfitter Local 486

Support HB 554 Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2025

On behalf of the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486, which represent 2,000+ Plumbers, Steamfitters, Welders, and HVAC Techs across Maryland, I ask you to **Support HB 554**.

As an organization, we commend the Committee for prioritizing improvements to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund's structure, especially considering the challenges many Maryland workers face during unemployment. The proposed adjustments could ensure that our UI system is responsive to current economic realities and provides adequate support to those in need. I would like to highlight several aspects of the bill that I believe are particularly important. First, revisiting and potentially revising the formula for calculating weekly benefit amounts offers an opportunity to enhance fairness and adequacy. We urge the Committee to consider how the new methodology can better reflect the cost of living in different regions of the state, ensuring benefits align with workers' actual needs. Additionally, adjusting the taxable wage base to reflect current wage trends is a positive step toward ensuring the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund remains well-funded and sustainable. Employers' contributions are essential to its solvency, and we encourage the Committee to strike a balance between maintaining adequate funding and not overburdening employers. The proposal to modify the dependent allowance is also valuable, as it will better support individuals with children or other dependents, addressing the insufficiency of the current allowance for many families. Finally, requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to make the State's annual average wage publicly available online is an important move to increase transparency and accessibility. This will provide workers and employers with the information necessary to understand the parameters used to determine both benefits and contributions, fostering greater trust in the system.

I respectfully urge the Economic Matters Committee to consider these points as you deliberate on House Bill 554. The proposed changes represent an important step toward ensuring that Maryland's Unemployment Insurance system remains fair, responsive, and sustainable. By supporting working Marylanders and fostering a healthy business environment, we can build a stronger and more resilient economy.

Sincerely,

Christopher Anderson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Anderson", written in a cursive style.