



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 **SB 938– Fraud Prevention and Worker Protections - Prohibitions, Penalties, and Enforcement** **March 5th, 2025**

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports SB 938 and urges the Senate Finance Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a commonsense measure for preventing workplace fraud and abuse for Maryland workers.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and MTA Commuter Bus among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Throughout the Union's history, we have had to fight tooth and nail to get fairness for our members. Be it a living wage, a secure retirement system, quality health insurance, or stable hours, Local 689 has been on the front lines of the fights to bring a decent quality of life to blue-collar transit workers. Indeed, when transit workers themselves began organizing, we were not given the same rights they have today. Unfortunately, this meant that oftentimes, unscrupulous managers would lie to workers about their rights and benefits.

While some of the most proud and outlandish lies have been thankfully outlawed, Maryland must ensure that it has a strong system for holding employers accountable for lying about unemployment benefits, pay records, or any other major worker program that the state puts into place. The Maryland Wage and Hour Law, the Maryland Wage Payment and Collection Law, workplace fraud laws, living wage laws, and prevailing wage laws all function on a mutual understanding by all parties that they are working on the same basis: the truth. Knowingly misleading, misholding, or otherwise distorting information to abuse workers and prevent them from their protections is abhorrent.

SB 938 thankfully tightens the enforcement around all of these necessary statutes, particularly by creating a Worker Protection Unit in the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). Local 689 is excited to see this unit work in partnership with workers across the state to ensure that this kind of fraud and abuse is rooted out.

The Union thanks the administration and OAG for introducing this worthy measure and urges the committee to issue a favorable report.