



The Honorable Pam Beidle,  
Chair Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St  
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable C.T. Wilison  
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Support for HB 501 and SB 431 w/ Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Wilson, and honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee,

On behalf of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Metropolitan Washington (MCAMW), I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on HB501 / SB431, legislation that aims to enhance the state's registered apprenticeship system.

MCAMW proudly represents 200 construction contractors, approximately 10,000 workers, and 1,500 apprentices. Our organization contributes significantly to the region's economy, generating nearly \$2 billion in annual revenue and approximately \$500 million in state, federal, and local taxes each year.

We recognize the bill's potential to strengthen workforce development in Maryland, and we support the legislation with amendments to ensure its implementation effectively meets industry and worker needs. The following amendments are suggested to strengthen the bill, and safeguard sectors of our industry:

#### **1. Expanding Data Collection in 11-405**

Subsection (d)(1) outlines reporting requirements for apprenticeship programs, which we strongly support. However, we recommend expanding data collection and reporting requirements to include:



- Post-apprenticeship worker outcomes for at least five years, including:
  - Wage progression,
  - Job placement rates,
  - Retention statistics, and
  - Career advancement data.

This expansion would provide a more comprehensive assessment of apprenticeship program effectiveness and help Maryland refine its workforce development strategies.

## **2. Avoiding Redundant Bureaucracy in 11-409 – Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD)**

HB 501 / SB 431 establishes the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD) within the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP). While we support initiatives that enhance Maryland’s apprenticeship system, we do not see the necessity for a new, separate office.

Instead, we recommend expanding staff and resources within the existing MATP structure to accomplish MORAD’s stated mission without adding an additional administrative layer. This approach will ensure efficiency while still advancing the state’s registered apprenticeship system.

## **3. Addressing Concerns with the Intermediary Program in 11-410**

The bill proposes creating a Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program, which adds a separate administrative layer that may be unnecessary. Current federal regulations already permit industry intermediaries and apprenticeship facilitators, raising questions about the need for this new program.

Should this provision remain in the bill, we recommend the following amendments:

- Clarify the definition of Qualified Intermediary to specify eligibility criteria and indicate whether out-of-state entities may qualify.
- In Subsection (4)(I), replace “Apprenticeship Program Participants” with “Potential Apprentices” to reflect the program’s intended role in outreach and recruitment.



- Define whether intermediaries may serve as registered apprenticeship sponsors and clarify their inclusion or exclusion under Section 11-607.

These amendments would provide transparency and ensure that any new intermediary programs operate effectively within Maryland's workforce system.

#### **4. Strengthening the Apprenticeship Incentive Program in 11-607**

HB 501 / SB 431 establishes an Apprenticeship Incentive Program, which we support in principle. However, the bill currently limits incentive eligibility to "newly registered apprentices", creating confusion between incentives for launching new programs and incentives for hiring apprentices.

To ensure that incentives support sustained employment rather than short-term enrollment, we recommend:

- Strengthening (F)(4) to require firms to commit to retaining apprentices through the full apprenticeship period and beyond, unless the apprentice voluntarily leaves or is dismissed for cause.
- Ensuring that incentives prioritize both program creation and long-term employment outcomes, aligning funding with workforce retention goals.

#### **5. Removing Unnecessary Plumbers Licensing Provisions in 12-305**

The plumbers licensing provisions in HB 501 / SB 431 pose significant safety risks by reducing examination requirements in a profession where high heat, high pressure, and hazardous gases are routinely encountered. Plumbers work with pressurized water and gas lines, where improper installation can lead to explosions, leaks, and structural failures. Exposure to natural gas, sewer gases, and carbon monoxide without proper training increases the risk of poisoning and fire hazards. Additionally, plumbers often use high-heat equipment such as torches and soldering tools, requiring technical expertise to prevent fires and burns. Removing rigorous licensing requirements undermines public health and safety, making it essential to maintain current standards.



In conclusion, we support HB501 / SB341 with the aforementioned amendments, as an important step in expanding apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland. However, our suggested refinements are necessary to avoid redundancy, strengthen workforce accountability, and ensure effective use of resources. We urge the committee to consider the recommended amendments outlined above to enhance the bill's impact while minimizing unnecessary administrative expansion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working together to refine and implement effective apprenticeship policies that benefit Maryland's workforce and industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Bello", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Thomas L. Bello  
Executive Vice President  
Mechanical Contractors Association of Metropolitan Washington