



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

JOSEPH F. DABBS: Business Manager • THOMAS C. MYERS: President • RICHARD D. WILKINSON: Vice President
CHRISTOPHER M. CASH: Financial Secretary • RICHARD G. MURPHY: Recording Secretary • WILLIAM T. NG: Treasurer



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of SB 576 LABOR & EMPLOYMENT-MANDATORY MEETINGS - WORKER FREEDOM ACT February 19, 2024

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Tom Clark, Political Director, Int. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the Committee, I ask you to join me in **full support of SB 576**. I appreciate the sponsors of this bill and ask the Finance committee to protect my first amendment rights and look favorable upon this bill.

Often employers are holding the “purse strings” and this monetary power is used to influence their employees. It’s interesting that an employer cannot use their power and office to gain a personal, often sexual relationship with employee, but a soliciting their political or religious beliefs is acceptable. I would think any use of this employer power is unacceptable and not suitable in our great state. I, for one think the first amendment and its separation of church and state is one of the greatest gifts that are founding fathers gave us. As a man of faith, I find this works for both the place of work and the place of prayer. Back in 2016, an activist priest shared his thoughts on the two Presidential candidates, during his homily. Without making a scene, I chose to walk out of the church for 10 minutes until the homily was over. After Mass, I respectfully spoke to the Priest and shared my feelings. I do not want to hear politics from the altar, and I do not want to hear religion from the office podium. It’s not just my beliefs, it’s the law.

Unfortunately, in today’s world, politics of any kind turns into a firestorm. It is what the current President of the United States started back in 2016 and continues to use to divide this country today. I hope, you as the General Assembly, can take religion and politics out of the workplace and leave our religion for the church and our politics at the polling place.

I hope you can join with me and prevent these “captive audience” meetings and protect the Maryland worker from intimidation in the conference room. I ask for your **support of SB 576 and support of the First amendment**. Thank you.

