



PLUMBERS LOCAL UNION NO. 5

UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPE FITTING INDUSTRY OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Testimony of Terriea "T" Smalls

Business Manager / Financial Secretary Treasurer, UA Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 5

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee
In Opposition to HB 321 / SB 303

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Chair Beidle, and Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee:

As the Business Manager and Financial Secretary Treasurer of UA Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 5 and our over 1,900 members and 400 apprentices and their families, I write today to express our unequivocal opposition to HB 321 and SB 303. These bills threaten the stability and affordability of healthcare benefits that union members and working families rely on throughout the state.

For decades, our union has negotiated diligently to secure employer-sponsored healthcare plans that provide comprehensive and affordable coverage. These plans are vital to the well-being of our members and their families, and they also play a crucial role in maintaining a skilled and reliable workforce. HB 321 and SB 303 would undermine these hard-earned benefits by introducing policies that increase costs and reduce protections under the current framework.

The proposals outlined in this legislation are deeply concerning. They would lead to significant increases in healthcare costs, including higher co-pays, deductibles, and prescription drug prices. Maryland families are already grappling with rising costs of living, and these additional financial burdens would make it even harder for working people to access necessary care. Furthermore, these bills weaken federal protections under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), which provides critical safeguards for employer-sponsored plans. By doing so, the legislation creates uncertainty and raises costs for employers, who may be forced to scale back benefits or pass higher expenses onto employees.

Union members and public servants are the backbone of our communities. They build, repair, and maintain the essential systems that keep Maryland running. These individuals deserve secure, affordable healthcare—not policies that place profits over people. HB 321 and SB 303 prioritize the interests of entities seeking to maximize their gains at the expense of workers and their families. If enacted, these bills could destabilize Maryland's healthcare system, impacting not only union members but also the broader economy.

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Terriea "T" L. Smalls
Business Mgr. / Financial Sec-Treas.

Michael S. Canales, Jr.
Asst. Business Manager

Anthony A. Solis
Business Rep. and Organizer

Julius Wright
Business Rep. and Organizer

It is critical that Maryland legislators reject this legislation and instead work to protect and strengthen the employer-sponsored healthcare system. Such action would uphold the values of fairness and security that are fundamental to Maryland's workforce and economy.

On behalf of the dedicated members of UA Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 5, I urge you to issue an unfavorable report on HB 321 and SB 303. Together, we can ensure that Maryland's working families continue to have access to the affordable healthcare they need and deserve.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terriea T Smalls', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Terriea "T" Smalls
Business Manager / Financial Secretary Treasurer
UA Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 5