



TESTIMONY OF SEIU 32BJ
HOUSE BILL 1499
March 11, 2025

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Assistant to the President

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ISRAEL MELENDEZ
HELENE O'BRIEN
ROCHELLE PALACHE
MICHAEL PISTONE
KEVIN STAVRIS
SAM WILLIAMSON

Capital Area District
Washington 202.387.3211
Baltimore 410.244.6299
Virginia 202.387.3211

Connecticut District
Hartford 860.560.8674
Stamford 203.674.9965

Mid-Atlantic District 1201
215.226.3600
215.923.5488
302.295.4814

Florida District
305.672.7071

Hudson Valley District
914.328.3492

Kentucky District
502.368.9122

New England District 615
617.523.6150

New Jersey District
973.824.3225

Western Pennsylvania District
412.471.0690

www.seiu32bj.org

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of SEIU Local 32BJ in support of HB 1499, which, in its current form, would require state construction and service contracts to include an equitable adjustment clause, allowing for cost adjustments when statutory labor standards or collective bargaining agreements raise the minimum required compensation for workers employed on the contracts.

SEIU 32BJ represents 175,000 members across 11 states and Washington, D.C., with 4,500 members in Maryland. Our members provide essential services in public facilities, commercial and residential buildings, airports, and a variety of other locations. 32BJ supports this reform because we understand just how critically important it is to reducing worker turnover and promoting high-quality security, janitorial, and other services in state facilities.

Service sectors are vulnerable to high worker turnover rates driven by low wages.ⁱ High turnover can have profoundly negative impacts on facility safety: less on-the-job experience may lead to more mistakes, accidents, or overlooked hazards.ⁱⁱ 32BJ has long worked to raise standards in the security and janitorial sectors, negotiating collective bargaining agreements that boost wage and benefits levels, improve working conditions, and stabilize the workforce. By reducing turnover, higher compensation standards result in a more experienced workforce that is better able to maintain high security standards at public facilities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, collective bargaining standards may be undermined if state contracts fail to account for union-negotiated increases. The proposed legislation is a commonsense reform to the state's procurement practices to address this issue.

Safeguarding union standards is not only good for facility safety; it also has the potential to save taxpayers money in the form of decreased reliance on Medicaid or other social services. Responsible employers that provide higher-quality jobs also benefit from knowing that they can raise standards without jeopardizing state contracts. And hard-working janitors and security guards also win out when they know they can exercise their right to collectively bargain without risking their jobs.

32BJ supports the current version of HB 1499. This modest reform to the state's procurement law has the potential to deliver real benefits to workers, the public, and to the state economy.



SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
CTW, CLC

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ⁱ Gallear, Amanda. "The Impact of Wages and Turnover on Security and Safety in Airport." UC Berkeley Labor Center. October 18, 2017. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2017/SFO-literature-review.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Gallear Amanda, UC Berkeley Labor Center and SFO, The Impact of Wages and Turnover on Security and Safety in Airports: A Review of the Literature, 10/18/17. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2017/SFO-literature-review.pdf> Pages 5-6.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gallear, Amanda. "The Impact of Wages and Turnover on Security and Safety in Airport." UC Berkeley Labor Center. October 18, 2017. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2017/SFO-literature-review.pdf>

Capital Area District

Jaime Contreras
Capital Area District Director

Washington DC |

1025 Vermont Ave, NW, 7th Floor
Washington DC 20005
202.387.3211

Baltimore |

10 East Baltimore Street Ste 1403
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.244.6299

Virginia

8618 Westwood Center Dr. Ste 308
Vienna, VA 22182
202.387.3211