



TESTIMONY OF AARON BAST, BUSINESS MANAGER & FINANCIAL SECRETARY-TREASURER
IRON WORKERS LOCAL 5

IN SUPPORT OF THE MARYLAND APPRENTICESHIP AND PREVAILING WAGE TRANSPARENCY ACT
(SB3 / HB850)

FAVORABLE

Dear Chairs Pena-Melnyk and Beidle, and Members of the House Government Operations Committee and Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Maryland Apprenticeship and Prevailing Wage Transparency Act. My name is Aaron Bast, and I am the Business Manager and Financial Secretary-Treasurer for Iron Workers Local 5. Our union has supplied skilled ironworkers for over a century, building Maryland's essential infrastructure. We strongly support this bill because it enforces fair labor standards and ensures taxpayer funds go to responsible contractors.

This legislation combats wage theft and worker misclassification, which undermine fair competition and harm law-abiding businesses. When contractors misclassify workers, they avoid paying unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and payroll taxes, draining public resources. A transparency system will help enforce prevailing wage laws, deterring unethical practices and ensuring workers receive fair pay.

Other states have seen success with similar measures. Nevada's apprenticeship database has improved training outcomes, while New York's compliance database has reduced fraud and increased state revenue. Maryland now has the chance to follow these proven models, strengthening labor protections and ensuring public projects are built by properly classified, well-trained workers.

The apprenticeship database will also enhance workforce development, ensuring training programs deliver real value. Union apprenticeship programs set the standard for excellence, and greater transparency will support a reliable pipeline of skilled labor, benefiting both workers and contractors.

This bill is a commonsense measure that supports workers, responsible businesses, and taxpayers alike. I urge you to vote in favor of the Maryland Apprenticeship and Prevailing Wage Transparency Act to promote fairness, accountability, and economic integrity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Aaron Bast
Business Manager & Financial Secretary-Treasurer