



**TESTIMONY OF CAUSE
MECHANICAL TRADES INDUSTRY MARKET RECOVERY AND JOINT COOPERATION PROGRAM
BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 673 / HOUSE BILL 1165 – FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

CAUSE—the Mechanical Trades Industry Market Recovery and Joint Cooperation Program—is a joint labor–management trust established by signatory contractors and labor organizations to promote cooperation, workforce development, and the long-term stability and competitiveness of the mechanical construction industry.

CAUSE respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165.

As a joint labor–management organization, CAUSE exists to strengthen collaboration between employers and workers, improve industry practices, and advance policies that promote skilled training, productivity, and sustainable workforce pipelines. A central component of that mission is ensuring that apprenticeship programs function as true pathways to completion and long-term employment—not merely points of entry.

Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165 advances that objective by establishing a modest and reasonable accountability standard for apprenticeship programs utilized in covered State procurement. By requiring a minimum **25 percent apprenticeship completion rate**, as determined by the Maryland Department of Labor, the bill helps ensure that public contracts rely on programs that are producing measurable workforce outcomes.

From a labor–management perspective, completion matters. Contractors depend on a reliable supply of trained, credentialed journeyworkers, and apprentices depend on programs that provide the structure, mentoring, and support necessary to carry them through to graduation. Programs that consistently fail to complete apprentices undermine both sides of the labor–management relationship and weaken the industry as a whole.

The completion threshold established in this legislation is not punitive or exclusionary. It does not mandate union affiliation, eliminate alternative compliance options, or restrict access to apprenticeship. Rather, it sets a baseline expectation that programs relied upon in public contracting demonstrate a basic level of effectiveness.

CAUSE believes that policies which reinforce completion-focused apprenticeship programs support workforce quality, industry stability, and responsible use of public resources. Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165 reflects those principles and aligns with the goals of labor–management cooperation that CAUSE was created to advance.

For these reasons, CAUSE respectfully urges the Committee to issue a **favorable report** on Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Bello

CAUSE, Mechanical Trades Industry Market Recovery
and Joint Cooperation Program