



TESTIMONY OF W. Thomas French
Division Manager
Welch and Rushe

BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 673 / HOUSE BILL 1165 – FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is W. Thomas French, and I am Division Manager at Welch and Rushe, a Maryland-based mechanical contracting firm. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165.

As a contractor, our business depends on highly skilled workers trained through registered apprenticeship programs. Completion of apprenticeship is essential to our ability to deliver safe, high-quality work, meet project schedules, and remain competitive.

This bill is straightforward. It simply requires that apprenticeship programs used on covered State contracts demonstrate a minimum 25% completion (graduation) rate, as determined by the Maryland Department of Labor. This is a reasonable standard that supports legitimate apprenticeship programs and responsible contractors.

Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165 helps ensure that public procurement supports apprenticeship programs that train and graduate skilled workers. For contractors like us who invest in workforce development, this bill levels the playing field and strengthens the construction workforce.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 673 / House Bill 1165.

Sincerely,

W. Thomas French

W. Thomas French
Division Manager
Welch and Rushe
Upper Marlboro, MD