



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO

Donna S. Edwards
President

Samuel Epps, IV
Secretary-Treasurer

📞 410.280.2233

📠 410.280.2956

📍 7 School Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-2096

HB 149 - Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

House Economic Matters Committee

February 19, 2026

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 149. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

HB 149 is a clear investment in public safety and the skilled workforce that protects Marylanders everyday. This legislation modernizes our fire prevention framework by ensuring that assistant and special assistant State Fire Marshals meet consistent, statewide standards for training, certification, and professional practice. Establishing uniform qualifications strengthens the quality and consistency of fire inspection and investigations across all jurisdictions.

The bill also strengthens life-safety protections by requiring smoke detectors in interior corridors, and during substantial renovations, the installation of sprinkler systems. These are both essential, life-critical infrastructures. By setting statewide standards for the professionals who inspect, test, and maintain these systems, the bill ensures that this work is performed by properly qualified, highly skilled technicians. These improvements increase system reliability, reduce preventable failures, and ultimately save lives.

Additionally, HB 149 recognizes the specialized work of technical fire alarm and fire-protection. Maryland's fire alarm professionals are part of an important industry that keeps our buildings safe and our systems functioning. A licensing and regulatory framework ensures that this work is performed by qualified individuals, supports the workforce, and protects residents. Maryland is already home to strong apprenticeship programs that align with national fire-protection standards, providing a robust pipeline of highly trained workers ready to perform this complex, technical work.

HB 149 strengthens public safety from various angles, through better standards, safer buildings, and a well-trained, skilled workforce. For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on HB 149.



unions@mddclabor.org



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