

# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

## AFFILIATED WITH:

Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building Trades Council - AFL-CIO  
Baltimore Port Council  
Baltimore Metro Council - AFL-CIO  
Central MD Labor Council - AFL-CIO  
Del-Mar-Va Labor Council - AFL-CIO  
Maryland State - D.C. - AFL-CIO  
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Written Testimony of  
Rico Albacarys, Assistant Business Agent, IBEW LOCAL 24  
Before the House Economic Matters Committee On  
HB 188 Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026

## Favorable

February 9, 2026

Madam Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Committee Members,

My name is Rico Albacarys, and I am a member and employee of IBEW Local 24. I am writing to express our support for HB 188, the Unemployment Insurance Act of 2026. When Maryland workers are laid off through no fault of their own, the impact on household finances can be immediate and severe. Right now, unemployment insurance in our state pays less than the minimum wage, which means too many families struggle to meet even their most basic needs.

I have personally relied on unemployment insurance, and I know firsthand how important that lifeline is for Maryland families. Strengthening these benefits is about more than short-term relief. It helps families stay current on rent and utilities, buy groceries, and maintain stability while they work to get back on their feet. Of course, construction work is cyclical, but so are many other segments of the economy. We have seen during recent economic disruptions, including the Key Bridge collapse and other recessions, that when workers receive added support, they recover more quickly and local economies are stronger as a result.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 188.

Sincerely,

Rico Albacarys  
Assistant Business Agent  
IBEW Local 24