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Economic Matter Committee

To: Delegate Kriselda Valderamma, Chair; Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee
From: Jason Ascher, Political Director – Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association

SUPPORT HB 188 – Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and our five United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Locals, which represent over 10,000 Plumbers, Steamfitters, Welders, HVAC Techs, and Sprinkler Fitters across Maryland, I ask you to **SUPPORT HB 188**.

Unemployment insurance is essential for workers who are temporarily laid off. It ensures that if someone is temporarily out of work, they receive a small amount of money to help them keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table while they look for their next job. As someone who has relied on unemployment insurance in the past (though not from Maryland), I know it helped me pay essential bills while searching for a job, but it certainly did not support a lavish lifestyle.

Changes to the Unemployment system are necessary. Making small changes, such as updating how the weekly benefit amount and employer contributions to the trust fund are calculated, would ensure that Unemployment insurance reflects real wages and living costs. These changes would go a long way toward improving the system and helping unemployed workers through a difficult time.

For the above reasons, we ask that you give **HB 188 a favorable Report**.

Sincerely

Jason Ascher
Political Director
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association