



- Electrical Workers
- Insulators
- Boilermakers
- United Association
- Plumbers & Gas Fitters
- Sprinkler Fitters
- Steam Fitters
- Roofers
- Cement Masons
- Teamsters
- Laborers
- Bricklayers
- Ironworkers
- Sheet Metal Workers
- Elevator Constructors
- Painters
- Operating Engineers
- Carpenters

The Hon. Kris Valderama, Chair
The Hon. Lorig Charkoudian, Vice Chair
230 and 231 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director,
Baltimore-Metro DC Building Trades Council**

on

**HB188: Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026
February 11, 2026**

My name is Ray Baker and I am the Maryland Director for the Baltimore/DC Building Trades. We represent 30,000 skilled trades construction workers across 28 unions. I write in support of HB188 urging a favorable report from the committee. Workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own reasonably look to programs such as unemployment insurance to serve as a bridge over troubled waters. Painfully, workers in construction face unemployment through no fault of their own more than other workers on account of the temporary and transient nature of our work.

Currently unemployment benefits are below the state's minimum wage and leave many unable to cover current basic living expenses. In current perilous times, this modernization will not enrich anyone but will allow Maryland workers to keep afloat as they secure employment. The state's response to crises such as the Bay Bridge collapse and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that when the state supports recovery efforts, we are all better positioned to bounce back and benefit the state. With that I urge a favorable report on HB188.

Value on Display... Everyday.

