

**PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 143**

**Public Works Contracts - Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)**

**SUBMITTED BY: CHRIS ANDERSON**

**BUSINESS AGENT, PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS LOCAL 486**

Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Chris Anderson, Business Agent of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486. On behalf of the members of Local 486, we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 143.

Senate Bill 143 represents a forward-thinking investment in Maryland's workforce, economy, and public infrastructure. By requiring contractors and subcontractors on public works projects to meet a defined percentage of labor hours performed by qualified apprentices or journey workers, this legislation ensures that taxpayer-funded projects help build the next generation of skilled workers.

Beginning January 1, 2027, the bill establishes a 20% apprenticeship labor hour requirement, with the Secretary of Labor empowered to set the applicable percentage annually. This phased and administratively guided approach provides predictability for contractors while steadily strengthening Maryland's skilled labor pipeline.

Rather than allowing contractors to simply make financial contributions to apprenticeship programs in lieu of employing apprentices, the bill prioritizes direct, hands-on workforce development. Real training occurs on real job sites. This legislation ensures that public investments translate into meaningful career pathways for Maryland residents.

Senate Bill 143 establishes clear definitions, measurable standards, and practical reporting requirements:

- Contractors employing four or more individuals must comply.
- Labor hours are clearly defined to exclude supervisory and executive roles.
- Contractors must verify compliance before beginning work.
- Monthly and final reports ensure transparency.
- Waivers are available when contractors demonstrate good-faith but unsuccessful efforts to secure apprentices.

This balanced framework promotes accountability while recognizing workforce realities.

The bill includes reasonable enforcement provisions to maintain the integrity of the system. Penalties for non-compliance and willful misrepresentation ensure that responsible contractors are not undercut by those who ignore workforce standards. At the same time, the waiver process provides flexibility when apprentices are not reasonably available.

Importantly, the bill applies to projects involving the University System of Maryland and Baltimore City Community College, ensuring that major public institutions participate in workforce development. It also respects local authority by not preempting additional workforce requirements enacted at the local level.

This legislation will:

- Expand access to high-quality, career-track jobs.
- Address skilled labor shortages in the construction industry.
- Increase productivity and safety through formal training.
- Ensure public dollars create long-term economic returns.

Apprenticeships are one of the most proven workforce development strategies available. Senate Bill 143 strengthens that model while maintaining flexibility and fairness.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 143.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Anderson  
Business Agent  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486