

**Testimony of The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross**  
Favorable With Amendments  
Senate Bill 143 Public Works Contracts Apprenticeship Requirements

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 143 with amendments.

As a municipal leader and retired United States Air Force veteran, I have witnessed firsthand how strong workforce pipelines strengthen communities, stabilize families, and expand economic opportunity. Public works investments should not only build infrastructure but also build people. This legislation moves Maryland toward that goal by requiring meaningful participation in registered apprenticeship programs tied directly to public projects.

Requiring contractors and subcontractors to employ qualified apprentices or journeymen creates structured pathways into skilled trades and ensures that taxpayer funded projects produce long term workforce benefits. The reporting requirements contained in this bill also improve transparency by allowing the public to see measurable outcomes connected to state spending.

However, amendments are necessary to ensure successful implementation at the local level.

First, flexibility should be provided for municipalities and smaller contractors when regional apprenticeship availability is limited. While the waiver process exists, clearer timelines and standardized review criteria will prevent project delays that can increase costs for local governments.

Second, technical assistance should be incorporated through the Department of Labor to help small and minority owned businesses comply with apprenticeship participation requirements. Without implementation support, well intentioned policy may unintentionally reduce contractor participation and competition.

Third, phased implementation options should be considered for smaller public bodies managing limited capital budgets. Municipal governments operate under tight fiscal constraints, and predictable compliance pathways will help ensure projects remain financially viable.

Senate Bill 143 represents an important step toward aligning workforce development with public investment. With targeted amendments that recognize municipal realities, this legislation can expand opportunity while maintaining efficiency, fairness, and accountability.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross Councilwoman At Large City of Glenarden