



**7050 Oakland Mills Road
Suite 180
Columbia, MD 21046**

**Phone: 410-290-3890
www.midatlanticpipetrades.o**

Finance Committee

To: Senator Pam Beidle, Chair; Senator Antonion Hayes, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee.
From: Jason Ascher, Political Director, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association.

SUPPORT – SB 60 – Fraud Prevention, Prevailing Wage, and Living Wage – Prohibitions, Penalties, and Enforcement

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and our five United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Locals, which represent 10,000+ Plumbers, Steamfitters, Welders, HVAC Techs, and Sprinkler Fitters across Maryland, I ask you to **SUPPORT SB 60**.

Maryland is consistently ranked among the worst states in the country for wage theft and misclassification. This is because, up until recently, there has been a reluctance to penalize contractors who violate these laws. They would get a slap on the wrist and be told, “Don’t do it again.” Here is a hint: it’s rarely a one-off situation; it is a business model. Several years ago, a contractor at Eva Turner Elementary School in Charles County submitted false certified payrolls to the Department of Labor. Workers listed on the payroll document were not the ones working on the jobsite, and the workers on the jobsite were not getting paid the prevailing wage. While these workers were resolving this in state court, the same contractor was doing the same thing on another school construction project in Prince George’s County.

SB 60 would be a step in the right direction to combat the wage-theft business model. It would impose more severe penalties for wage fraud on prevailing wage jobsites and allow the Department of Labor more leeway when investigating potential violators. It makes a general contractor jointly liable for all its subcontractors, meaning if a subcontractor is penalized, then the General contractor is too. This is something currently covered only by a private right of action for wage theft and misclassification. It would also provide the Attorney General with more opportunities to take on wage theft cases through cooperation with the Department of Labor. Finally, it would make it easier for the state to debar contractors who knowingly violate the law.

For the reason discussed above, I ask you to **SUPPORT SB 60**.

Sincerely,

Jason Ascher
Political Director
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association

Plumbers and Gasfitter Local 5 – Camp Springs, MD
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 10 – Richmond, VA/Roanoke, VA
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 110 – Norfolk, VA
Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 – Columbia, MD

Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486 – Baltimore, MD
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 489 – Cumberland, MD
Steamfitters Local 602 – Capitol Heights, MD



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