

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 673 / HB 1165

TO: Chair Guzzone, Chair Wells, and Honorable Members of the Committees

FROM: Jason Williams, Journeyman, UA Steamfitters Local 602 / Forged Pathways LLC.

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DATE: February 2026

Dear Chairs and Committee Members:

My name is Jason Williams, a proud journeyman graduate of the UA Steamfitters Local 602 apprenticeship program. I am here to urge a favorable report on SB 673 / HB 1165

I am currently working on the Next Generation Energy Project at the University of Maryland. This is a massive, complex power project critical to our state's infrastructure and future. I am only qualified to be on that job site because of the rigorous, **regulated training** I received through my registered apprenticeship.

By passing this bill, you ensure that Maryland's major projects are built by a workforce trained to a **national standard**, ensuring safety, quality, and longevity for Maryland taxpayers. We must maintain these standards because they are a proven investment. When we protect the integrity of registered apprenticeships, we fuel the state's economy.

This work carries forward the legacy of Maryland's own Frederick Douglass, who understood that mastering a craft was the ultimate vehicle for freedom. At Forged Pathways, the nonprofit I founded in the 3rd year of my apprenticeship, we carry that torch by showing the next generation that these trades are the modern path to dignity.

By protecting these standards through SB 673 / HB 1165, you are protecting the integrity of our workforce. Because I have experienced the power of this model firsthand on sites like the University of Maryland, **I know** we cannot afford to dilute it.

I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Jason Williams

Journeyman, UA Steamfitters Local 602

Founder, Forged Pathways, Inc.