

**PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 864**

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

**SUBMITTED BY: CHRIS ANDERSON**

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

Chair Wells and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections 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 House Bill 864.

Local 486 represents highly trained plumbers, steamfitters, pipefitters, and HVACR service technicians who build, maintain, and modernize Maryland's critical infrastructure. Our members complete a rigorous, multi-year apprenticeship program registered with the State of Maryland. Our program combines classroom instruction with thousands of hours of supervised on-the-job training to ensure the highest standards of safety, quality, and productivity.

House Bill 864 strengthens Maryland's commitment to workforce development by ensuring that public works contracts support apprenticeship training. By requiring contractors and subcontractors on covered public works projects to employ a specific percentage of qualified apprentices or journey workers, beginning at 20 percent for projects advertised after January 1, 2027. This bill guarantees that taxpayer-funded projects help build the next generation of skilled trades professionals.

Importantly, the bill repeals the provision that allowed contractors to make payments in lieu of employing apprentices. While financial contributions can support training programs, there is no substitute for real-world, on-site training opportunities. Apprenticeship is fundamentally a "learn while you earn" model. Without access to actual jobsite hours, apprentices cannot advance, complete their training, or become fully qualified journey workers. House Bill 864 ensures that public projects provide these essential training opportunities.

We also support the bill's clear reporting and compliance requirements. Requiring written verification before work begins and monthly reporting of labor hours and apprentice participation promotes transparency and accountability. Contractors who meet the requirements

will have nothing to fear from these provisions. At the same time, meaningful penalties for non-compliance including double unpaid contributions and fines per labor hour to ensure a level playing field and protect responsible contractors who follow the law.

The waiver provisions included in the bill are fair and practical. Contractors may seek a waiver if they can demonstrate that they requested qualified apprentices in writing and by telephone at least 90 days before their expected need. This ensures that the requirements are enforceable while recognizing that workforce supply can vary based on region and trade.

Maryland's public works projects should not only deliver quality infrastructure but also create career pathways for Maryland residents. Strong apprenticeship requirements ensure that public dollars create long-term economic opportunity, reduce reliance on out-of-state labor, and maintain the high standards of safety and craftsmanship our communities deserve.

For these reasons, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 864.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Anderson".

Chris Anderson  
Business Agent  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486