



February 18, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
The Honorable Ken Kerr, Vice Chair
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director, Baltimore DC Metro Building Trades Council on
HB 0864: Public Works Contracts - Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)
Position: FAVORABLE**

Thank you, Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 864. I am Ray Baker, Maryland Director of the Baltimore-DC Building Trades (BDCBT). The BDCBT's 28 affiliates represent more than 30,000 union construction workers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The BDCBT supports HB 864 which establishes a minimum threshold on public works construction projects for hours worked by registered apprentices. The bill calls for a minimum threshold of 20 percent, which can be adjusted by the Maryland Secretary of Labor.

The Building Trades unions have been operating high-quality apprenticeship programs for more than a century. Our programs provide workers with the training they need for well-paying construction careers with family-supporting wages and benefits. Apprenticeships function very similar to post-secondary higher education but uniquely, our apprenticeship programs are free. We proudly use the term "earn while you learn" to demonstrate the hands-on opportunity apprentices get to practice their craft, while learning the specific and intricate details that would make them a master craftsman. This message was masterfully communicated in your General Assembly colleague Sen. Cory McCray's book *The Apprenticeship that Saved My Life*.

Apprenticeship utilization policies are important because they spur demand for apprentice labor, which in turn helps ensure a pipeline of skilled and experienced workers for future projects. Many states already have apprentice utilization requirements for their public works projects. For instance, Washington State requires at least 15 percent of labor hours to be completed by apprentices on public works projects with an estimated cost of \$1 million or more. Nevada's requirements specify that public works projects must employ at least one apprentice for a minimum percentage of total labor hours for each type of work performed on the project. Maryland can help support the growth of apprenticeship programs by ensuring that its own public works programs are investing in registered apprenticeship opportunities. The

The BDCBT urges a favorable report on HB 864.

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