



## EASTERN ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

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### Testimony in Opposition to HB 163 Right to Work February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**To:** Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee  
**From:** The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters- Executive Secretary-Treasurer William C. Sproule

The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters vehemently oppose HB 163 which is to be before the Maryland General Assembly Economic Matters Committee on Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. The so-called right-to-work proposal is intended to weaken the representation of local union workers that are organized receive. The collective voice of a union allows local workers to bargain for better wages and working conditions which in turn helps provide better lives for union and non-union workers alike. The truth is that laws like this, already enacted in other states, are meritless and provides more profits for the rich while leaving workers with less.

Proponents will say that this law prevents “forced unionization”. The truth is there is no such thing as “forced unionization” in the United States of America. Federal law prohibits such assumptions. These facts can be easier verified within the National Labor Relations Act. Union members like the brothers and sisters of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters choose to join the union because they know that being part of a union opens the door to being the most skilled, highly trained carpenter in the construction industry. As a member of the union, they also understand that they are part of collectively bargained agreements that offer fair compensation, fair benefits, safe work environments and so much more. These benefits directly produce union families with a stable income to invest within their own community and provide the economic strength Maryland taxpayers deserve.

When we look at states that have passed similarly misguided bills like HB 163 we see workers and communities suffer.

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics workers in so-called right-to-work states earn 12% less per year. Less income means less investment in local businesses and less tax revenue. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014)
- Higher poverty rates are seen in these states with median household incomes being 13.9% less per year due to the creation of lower-wage jobs. Minimal or no benefits provided to workers lead to higher out-of-pocket expenses creating higher bankruptcy rates due to medical bills and higher out-of-pocket expenses for everyone. (US Census Bureau, 2014) (CFED, 2013)
- It is proven that the risk of workplace death is 54% higher in so-called right-to-work states as compared to states without these laws. (Zoorob, 2017)



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Representing members in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C., and 10 counties in North Carolina

- Right-to-Work states spend \$2,671 less per pupil on elementary and secondary education than free-bargaining states. (UFCW Local 1546, 2020)

Our comments today are to inform you that your vote today will make an immediate and substantial impact on the lives of the working-class people of Maryland. Maryland is home to some of the hardest working people in the country. They want the opportunity to provide a good life for their families and do so with dignity. The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters is proud to represent nearly 3,000 members who live in Maryland. Our organization and its members ask that their elected leaders in the House Economic Matters Committee vote no on HB 163 and stick up for the workers of this great state. Your NO vote will go a long way in defending worker rights and the representation that defends those rights.

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