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**SB 217 – Labor and Employment – Wage History and Wage Range
Senate Finance Committee
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SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
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Madam Chair and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 217 – Labor and Employment – Wage History and Wage Range. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Seeking employment is a stressful process, with prospective employers being in a much better position in the negotiating phase, leaving job seekers mostly at their mercy. SB 217 aims to balance the scales, by providing those eager to work a fairer playing field.

By requiring employers to provide a pay scale for a specific position, by request of an applicant, prospective employees can be assured of being on a level playing field with others applying for the same position. Additionally, knowing minimum salaries allows workers to make more informed decisions when applying for jobs.

Under current law, an employer may ask for an employee's pay history, while never having to disclose the salary range of the advertised position. This allows an employer to potentially low-ball an employee, creating inequities in pay, and giving the worker no recourse. Thankfully, under SB 217, employers will no longer be allowed to use salary history when considering a worker for a new position, including a promotion, and they may not use it in determining the wages for a worker.

SB 217 is fantastic tool to start to address the pay gap that exists between men and women in the work force. For women, salary history requests and pay decisions made based on that history propagates and maintains the wage gap between men and women. This is particularly true for women of color.

By disclosing salary ranges and stopping employers from using previous salaries as determining factors for employment and pay, job seekers may have a more level playing field with their potential employers.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB 217.