

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3E
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 991 (Apprenticeship and Training Council – Journeyworker–Apprentice Ratios – Electrical Craft or Trade)

Dear Chairwoman Kelley:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, opposes Senate Bill 991 (Apprenticeship and Training Council – Journeyworker–Apprentice Ratios – Electrical Craft or Trade).

This bill requires the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC) to adopt new regulations establishing that each electrical apprenticeship program must have a minimum ratio of one journeyperson for one apprentice.

Will cut apprenticeships and harm the trades. By basing the number of apprenticeships on the number of journeypersons, this measure limits the ability of employers to hire and train skilled laborers who are interested in the field. The homebuilding industry already faces a labor shortage; many workers left the industry during the recession, and never returned. Compounding this problem, a whole generation of younger workers is no longer considering residential/commercial construction as a viable career path. Many high schools have phased out shop classes, so students who might be interested in learning a trade no longer have the opportunity to do so. As older workers are retiring, no one is available to take their spots. When there is insufficient labor to meet the demand, employers in our industry must to pay more for that labor, which inflates the cost of homes.

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for Marylanders to enter the job market, gain experience in technical trades, earn a sustainable income, and contribute to the economic development of the State. These programs should be encouraged, not stifled.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Senate Finance Committee Members