

## **HB 1012 SUPPORT**

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### **Thurgood Marshall BWI Workers' Right to Reinstatement Act.**

House of Delegates Committee on Economic Matters

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Good Afternoon Chair Davis, Vice-Chair Dumais and members of the House Economic Matters Committee.

My name is Dana White. I was born and raised in Baltimore City; went to Edmondson High School. I now live in Windsor Mills in Baltimore County.

I am here today to speak in favor of HB 1012 on behalf the hundreds of service workers at Thurgood Marshall BWI Airport who have been laid off due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

I work as a server at the Flying Dog Restaurant in the Airport. I have worked here for eight years. There are a number of us servers, bartenders, cooks, cleaners, baristas, clerks, wheelchair attendants and cashiers who have worked for several years at the Airport.

As a server I have been able to support myself and my daughter and three grand children because of the tips I make from the traveling public.

In the beginning of March 2020, we saw our tips drop from \$300 a day to less than \$50.00 a day when travel restrictions appeared. Two weeks later we were laid off completely. I remember it was on St. Patrick's Day.

I had had to apply for unemployment in 2017 when the restaurant was remodeled so I knew what to do. However, many of my co-workers had a terrible time getting registered for and receiving unemployment benefits. They had no income for months.

I had to dip into my savings. I inherited my car from my father and was saving up for when I would have to get a new car. I also had plans to get the roof of my house fixed. All of that went by the wayside. I used the money to keep up with the rent and keep food on the table.

What gave me comfort was knowing that because of my Union contract, my employer had to recall me and my co-workers in order of our length of service when business picked up.

Fortunately, I was able to start back to work on June 24<sup>th</sup> even though business is way down. Travel business has dropped by 60%. Most of the restaurants in the airport are closed and the ones that are open have limited capacity and service. None of the tipped workers are making what we used to make. Still we are grateful to be working at all.

Most of my co-workers are still laid off as are hundreds of other Marshall BWI workers. We are all concerned about how long this will go on and if we will maintain our recall rights if it continues. The workers at the Airport that do not have a Union have no rights to be recalled at all. This isn't right.

This is why we need HB 1012.

I want you to imagine yourself in our shoes. We can't work from home. We can't quarantine at home and make a living. Think about losing your livelihood. How it would affect your family; how it would effect your plans for the future.

Usually in March at the airport we see a big rise in business, people traveling for Spring break, and family vacations. Well not last March; and not this March either; what about next March?

I think about my co-worker Sandy. She is 60 years old and a great server. If she had not recall rights and been able to come back to work, think about how hard it would be for her to get hired at a new restaurant.

The State has given rent relief and extended leases to business at the airport. We need you to do something for the workers who have also been affected by the Pandemic. Put yourself in our shoes. Wouldn't you want the security that you would be recalled to your job when business came back?

I urge you to give HB 1012 a favorable reading.