



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 1012 – Labor and Employment – Reinstatement of Employment – Employees at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI-Thurgood Marshall Workers’ Right to Reinstatement Act)

House Economic Matters Committee

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SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1012 – Labor and Employment – Reinstatement of Employment – Employees at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI-Thurgood Marshall Workers’ Right to Reinstatement Act). My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

With record layoffs and job closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that we get people back to work as quickly as we can and as safely as possible. “Back to work” is the key phrase here. Pre-COVID 19 Pandemic hundreds of workers were employed performing a wide variety of services at our State’s Airport: Food and Beverage preparation and serving, retail sales, cleaning, and other services. When the Pandemic hit Maryland, business at the Airport plunged. Only 20% of the food and retail workers are still employed, with 80% being laid off without work for almost a full year. Businesses cannot take advantage of a dire economic situation in order to liquidate people’s jobs with no chance of them returning.

HB 1012 provides a level of future job security for those workers at BWI who have been displaced from their current job, by putting them first in line for reinstatement. This is crucial to maintaining the livelihoods of workers and their families, as well as the economic stability of communities. Temporarily displaced workers need the peace of mind of knowing that their jobs are coming back.

Not allowing for reinstatement is also a de facto method for unscrupulous businesses to simply lay-off workers whenever they are deemed “too expensive”, with the intent to bring in lower-skilled and lower-paid workers to fill those positions. A lack of reinstatement policy can potentially be the “camel’s nose under the tent” for bad businesses to mistreat their workers.

We ask for a favorable report on HB 1012.