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**SB 594 – Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification
Senate Finance Committee
February 25, 2021**

OPPOSE

**Donna S. Edwards
President
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Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 594 – Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Verification. 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, I offer the following comments.

SB 594 is another attempt to weaken protections for workers and to dilute Earned Sick Leave for working Marylanders. Under current law, workers may use their Earned Sick Leave as they need it and are not subject to capricious demands of verification by a mercurial management. Verification of the use of Earned Sick Leave is based on mutually agreed upon terms between the employer and the employee. SB 594 nullifies that, completely, allowing the employer to unilaterally implement their own verification method and to deny a request for Earned Sick Leave. Moreover, there is a logical inconsistency in a worker providing “insufficient” verification – after taking the leave – but still allowing an employer to deny it.

The Maryland Health Working Families Act has directly benefited over 700,000 Maryland workers and their families. The law took more than five years to pass, with input from hundreds of stakeholders. It is a law created through compromise, and, as such, should be allowed to stand, as written. There is no reason to create more carve-outs, exemptions, or to dilute this legislation, any further.

We ask for an unfavorable report on SB 594.