

Bill SB1 / HB145

Good afternoon, Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and honorable members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Sergio Bautista-Reyes and I am council representative at the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. I'm a resident of Baltimore County, in the second district. I'm here today to testify in favor of bill SB1 / HB145.

Before I became a member of the carpenters local, I worked for several labor brokers, getting paid in cash or checks without any tax deductions, never got paid OT, even got hurt a couple times in the job site but my boss did not care at all. I remember the first time I heard about the union and asked my boss about it, said "don't you ever talk to those people, they are not good for you". After a few years I was blessed to be organized by one of the Local Representatives who educated me about the ongoing dynamic in the construction industry and the benefits of joining the carpenters local, so I did. After five years in the local I got the opportunity to start working for the Council of Carpenters.

Being a Representative for the Carpenters Council has giving me the opportunity to educate workers in this trade, help them to understand their rights and that there is a better way of life by joining the local and stop working for these labor brokers who exploit them and undermine our industry by paying low wages and cheating the system.

I do not regret, taking the decision to become a member of the carpenters local because I have been able to provide for my family and help others in need and at the same time have a peace of mind looking forward for the benefit of a future retirement. I believe that without this legislation, thousands of workers that are in the same situation I was in before, will have a harder time finding a job with fair wages and benefits or even building a business because we can't compete against contractors that cheat their workers and the taxpayers.

Please support this legislation.