



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 583 PUBLIC UTILITIES-INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES-PREVAILING WAGE

February 16, 2024

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Tom Clark, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, members of the Senate Finance Committee, I respectfully ask that you vote in **support of SB 583**. This legislation pays utility workers, linemen, and linewomen the prevailing wages for their work on underground gas or electric infrastructure projects.

The heart of this bill is the phrase “Prevailing Wage”, which I would like to define clearly for all legislators in Annapolis. Prevailing Wage is nothing more than the market rate. The market rate is defined as the amount of money that an employee should be paid for their position, based on the current market conditions, their education, training, and cost of living in that given area. Most working people in Maryland are paid the market rate, for example: Engineers, Office Personnel, Accountants and even members of the General Assembly are paid based on the current market conditions, their education, training, and cost of living in that given area (the market rate). It is correct that these workers may argue that the compensation falls short, and I would agree, but it is the market rate. The problem arises when for some reason utility workers, linesmen and construction workers are treated differently. Quite often, it is presumed that these “blue collar workers” deserve less than the market rate. As a representative of the people, I hope you see the disparity in this logic. I hope you can see that all Marylanders deserve the market rate, that all Marylanders deserve to be paid based on the current market conditions, their education, training, and cost of living in that given area.

Moving forward, I hope you can support utility workers, as you would Teachers. Linemen as you would Accountants and Construction workers as you would Delegates and Senators. Paying any citizen of our great state less than the Market Rate or Prevailing Rate is not good for Maryland and its working families. So, I encourage you to **support lines people and construction workers** and when you are asked to vote, **support SB 583** Thank you.

