



**Testimony of Victoria Leonard, Political and Legislative Director,
Baltimore-Washington Laborers' District on
Montgomery County Council Bill 35-21:
Prevailing Wage – Construction Contracts – Amendments**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Bill 35-21. My name is Victoria Leonard. I am the Political and Legislative Director for the Baltimore Washington Laborers' District Council. We are an affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America, or LiUNA for short. The District Council represents more than 7,500 construction workers across the region, many of whom reside in Montgomery County.

On behalf of LiUNA, thank you so much for introducing this bill, and with such wide support. A special thanks to Council President Hucker and Councilmember Jawando for working together as lead sponsors. And a shout-out as well to co-sponsors Councilmembers Rice, Albornoz, Katz and Riemer. We at LiUNA feel that this is a great moment in Montgomery County.

LiUNA supports this bill because it brings the county's prevailing wage threshold into line with the state's threshold, which is now \$250,000. LiUNA also supports the broader definition of construction included in the bill. All workers on county construction contracts deserve to earn a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. And contractors who pay fair wages and benefits deserve a fair shot to compete and win work. Finally, LiUNA supports this bill because it champions local hiring.

However, LiUNA would like to suggest strengthening Bill 35-21 in two important ways:

1. Projects receiving economic development subsidies need to be more holistically addressed in the bill. Baltimore County, which passed its prevailing wage law in 2020, and Anne Arundel County, which passed its prevailing law last month, both cover subsidized projects receiving more than \$5 million in county funds. LiUNA hopes that Montgomery County will be able to do the same, or even better.
2. The process for implementing the local hiring provision needs to be spelled out in Bill 35-21, rather than leaving it to up to county government to adopt regulations. Both the Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County prevailing wage laws provide good examples for things like reporting requirements and what to do when a violation occurs.

In closing, we at LiUNA appreciate the Council for taking on the effort to update the County's prevailing wage law, and we look forward to working with you on finalizing this bill.