

July 7th 2022

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 12-22
Electricity-Board of Electrical Examiners-Licenses-Permit Requirements

To: Council President Alborno and distinguished Members of the Council
From: Tom Clark, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26

Members of the Montgomery County Council, on behalf of the 10,000 members of IBEW Local 26, I strongly **oppose** Bill 12-22, Electricity-Board of Electrical Examiners-Licenses-Permit Requirements. This bill, intended to reflect the changes of the new "Maryland Electricians Act" passed by the General Assembly, goes astray and seeks to add a "low voltage" license. This "low voltage" license undercuts the intention of a licensed Electrician and will put the safety of your constituents and the buildings they live and work, in jeopardy. I respectfully ask that you also **oppose** this bill.

A licensed electrician and a "low voltage" worker, differ like apples and oranges. A licensed electrician is required to work under a master electrician for 3 years, required to have 4 years of classroom training and pass a statewide wide examination. The "low voltage" worker need not qualify for these requirements, yet this Bill will allow that person to work on Fire Alarm systems that are powered by 120- and 480-volt systems. The same Fire Alarm systems in schools and hospitals that contain your most vulnerable citizens. I believe, along with the General Assembly, that any life safety system should be installed and maintained by licensed electricians, period!

The history of attaching this low voltage language to an Electricians bill is unfortunately commonplace. The Maryland Electricians Act (which Bill 12-22 is supposed to reflect) took some 9 years to pass, simply because of the low voltage language. The sponsors (McCray and Hornberger) realized their efforts to have a statewide electricians license were being hampered by the low voltage lobby. The apples and oranges scenario was apparent. As soon as the low voltage language was removed, the bill passed, safety was ensured and a statewide license was born.

In conclusion, I ask that the Council consider the safety of the residents and buildings of Montgomery County and allow only qualified, licensed electricians to perform this "life safety" work. Please join me in **opposition to Bill 12-22**. Thank you

James Merriam



President
JKM Electric Inc.