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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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**HB 641 Testimony - Collective Bargaining –
Chancellor of the University System of Maryland**

- I'm proud to present HB 641 a common sense bill that would end the patchwork and inefficient system of campus by campus collective bargaining among the 12 University System of Maryland (USM) institutions, centers, and regional centers.
- Under the current system of campus collective bargaining, more than 30 individual contracts must be negotiated throughout the system and ultimately approved by the Chancellor and the Board of Regents.
- HB 641 would replace an inefficient and duplicative system with the same collective bargaining set-up we use for the rest of state government. For all state agencies – which range from child welfare services and correctional officers to agricultural inspectors, water quality scientists, and business development specialists – there is one master contract negotiated between AFSCME and the Governor.
- Just like the rest of state government, this legislation would consolidate bargaining between the Chancellor and the Board of Regents and AFSCME locals at institutions across the state allowing for side agreements to be negotiated when individual circumstances dictate it:
 - Ex: Parking at College Park or snow days at Frostburg State.
- Despite what you'll hear about each President and campus having full autonomy, under the current system, existing contracts must still be approved by the Board of Regents. Individual campuses regularly seek approval from the USM over details and contracts can be delayed for months because of this back and forth. At individual campuses, local units are often told they can't bargain certain issues because those issues are controlled by the Board of Regents:
 - At Bowie State, local negotiators wanted to agree to fair share language but were told by the USM that they could not.
 - At College Park, local unions are regularly told by school management that they cannot negotiate wages because they are set by the USM.

- At the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, local unions were also told that they could not bargain wages as well as a host of other issues because they were controlled by the USM.
- Additionally, the USM and seven campus engage in voluntary “coalition bargaining,” which attempts to create some level of uniformity for contract negotiations. This bargaining is led by the USM, who negotiates on behalf of the campuses that are part of the coalition.
- This confusion adds to the already complicated, confusing, and unnecessary patchwork of negotiations. Why do some campuses bargain together while others are separate?
- HB 641 would enable AFSCME to negotiate directly with the USM Chancellor and Board of regents, the body that sets wages and employment policies, streamlining the process and likely making it cheaper and far more efficient.
- Fundamentally, this legislation is about fairness. It’s about ensuring that all workers are paid appropriately for their work across the system.
- With no fiscal note and likely a possible savings, I urge a favorable report for HB 641.