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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
HB 152 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020
Favorable with Amendment

There are many issues addressed in HB 152. On behalf of 18,000 state employees, we are concerned with pages 23-27 which delete efforts by the General Assembly to provide a 2% pay raise to state employees this fiscal year provided that the non-withholding income tax revenues exceeded estimates.

With this action, the Governor has chosen to delete up to a 2% pay raise to bargaining units represented by AFSCME and AFT. This action is in addition to a 1% pay raise that was denied to AFSCME bargaining units. With the exception of Fire Fighters, who had higher raises, that 1% raise was provided to all other state employees, whether represented in collective bargaining or not. In other words, supervisors, managers, and Secretaries of Departments received that 1% raise.

These denials are ill-advised and retaliatory. Just look at the timing. In the fall of 2018, the Hogan Administration insisted on ground rules for AFSCME's collective bargaining that included, in essence, a gag order. We would have been prevented from effectively communicating with our members and barred from communicating with legislators about collective bargaining issues. We refused to sign and filed an Unfair Labor Practice against the state. Because management would not continue negotiations, we had no contract for 2019. In spite of this lack of contract, AFSCME members received the 3% COLA that was negotiated by AFT in the summer of 2019. However, in the fall of 2019 we received the decision on the ULP. It determined that the actions of the Hogan Administration would violate basic constitutional rights. Following that decision, AFSCME-represented employees were denied the 1% raise.

These actions were ill-advised. Employees denied these raises include hard-to-recruit classifications like Correctional Officers, Juvenile Case Workers, and low paid jobs in clerical classifications, Social Services and Security. This is the opposite of what is needed to provide quality state services.

We ask the General Assembly to repair this damage and restore the total of 3% that was denied to hard-working state employees. This action would help protect vital state services, and assist in eliminating high vacancy rates at key state agencies.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation. An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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