



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO SB 430 SOUTHERN MARYLAND CODE COUNTIES-COLLECTIVE BARGAINING APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE

Council 67 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFMSCE), AFL-CIO supports public employees who want a voice in their workplace. AFSCME helps employees create fairer, safer, and more just, public service careers. AFSCME represents thousands of county and municipal employees across Maryland from Allegany County to Carroll County to Harford County, from Cumberland to Takoma Park to Bowie to Baltimore.

SB 430 empowers code counties in southern Maryland, currently Charles County, to enact a local collective bargaining law. Many employees in Charles County have long enjoyed collective bargaining rights including Charles County teachers, Board of Education employees - who are currently represented by AFSCME – and Sheriff's deputies. The County has succeeded and been bettered by these rights and relationships.

The County's regular employees – those serving in public works, emergency services, planning, and recreation and parks – do not currently have a right to organize and collectively address wages, hours, and other working conditions. Those employees have made clear that they want a voice. They want to help create a stronger civil service with an even more dedicated and capable workforce to attend to the County's needs and the needs of its citizens. Employees want to help solve problems, ensure just and safe workplaces, and generally build a great county to live and work in.

SB 430 allows Charles County – and other counties in the future – to enact an appropriate collective bargaining law. The bill builds on the express powers granted to the County and sets the core terms of such a law consistent with collective bargaining laws across Maryland. It provides for employee choice and precludes strikes and lock outs. To ensure fairness and productive negotiations, the bill provides for arbitration and relief from unfair labor practices. The particulars of collective bargaining rights are left to the county commissioners to determine.

In sum, SB 430 will lay a foundation for County employees to have the voice they so strongly desire and so greatly deserve. AFSCME commends the Charles County delegation for introducing SB 430 and commends the Board of Charles County Commissioners for their expressed commitment to giving County employees these rights.

We ask respectively a Favorable reporting on SB430