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**Written Testimony submitted to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 639 - State Medical, Nursing and Security Personnel - Compensation
March 6, 2020**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Kelley and members of the committee. On behalf of the 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), we ask for a favorable report on SB 639 with the inclusion of the amendment that properly states the somatic physicians job title with that of the corresponding psychiatrist job title.

Somatic physicians in state mental health facilities, care for the comprehensive medical needs of psychiatric patients to avoid costly transfers to outside hospitals. Patients typically have more illnesses than the general population, both because of their mental challenges and side effects of psychiatric medications.

In 2018, to help deal with recruitment and retentions issues, the Department of Budget and Management approved a 12% salary increase for psychiatrists and the implementation of a higher pay schedule. However, it left the somatic physicians on the outdated pay scale and with the same recruitment and retention issues.

In addition, as a result of the long history of problems with hiring and keeping Registered Nurses (RN), Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center gave RN's at the facility step increases. RN Charges, Supervisors and Managers did not get the same increase in salary.

These RNs are shift leaders. They assign tasks and oversee the RN's assigned to their units. As a result, RN Charges, Supervisors and Managers are performing higher level duties and being paid less. This bill will provide salary equity for all RN's at Perkins.

Finally, this bill will rectify the pay disparity between Security Attendants and Correctional Officers who are required to have the same qualifications and training for their position.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report with an amendment on SB 639.

Marietta English
President