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Montgomery County

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

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Sponsor Testimony in Support of House Bill 837, Collective Bargaining - Teachers at the Maryland School for the Deaf - Separate Bargaining Unit

Before the House Appropriations Committee

February 10, 2021

House Bill 837 would permit teachers at the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) to enter into collective bargaining negotiations.

Currently, MSD teachers and staff are members of the local union – MSD Faculty and Staff Association, Local 4828, yet do not have collective bargaining rights. HB 837 fills a gap in our law by ensuring that these teachers have the same right to collective bargaining enjoyed by all other state professional service employees and K-12 teachers in Maryland.

The Maryland School for the Deaf was founded in 1868 and is a State run, K-12 school. There are 2 MSD locations in the State, one in Frederick, and the other in Columbia. The Columbia school was founded in 1973, where students study through middle school and then transfer to the Frederick location for their high school studies. The school serves students from all across the State. We all have an interest in the school's success.

Just as with other teachers across Maryland, MSD faculty and staff are highly qualified and specialized professionals, which should be recognized. This will be accomplished through collective bargaining rights. We've asked a lot of our teachers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and MSD teachers are every bit as needed and valuable as other teachers in Maryland.

I am proposing two amendments that will replace “teachers” with faculty, so that all members of the existing union are covered. The same concept in support of collective bargaining rights for teachers applies to the entire faculty.

Other witnesses will elaborate on the importance of this bill.

I ask for your favorable report.