



SEIU Maryland & DC State Council

1410 Bush Street, Suite F, Baltimore, MD 21230

Testimony in FAVOR of HB 504
Collective Bargaining -Public School Employees – Authorization to Strike

House Ways and Means Committee
February 17, 2022
1:00 PM

Presented to: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairman

By: Terry Cavanagh, Executive Director, SEIU Maryland & DC State Council

We urge a FAVORABLE Report on HB 504.

The right to strike is a basic right of workers and should be recognized by the State of Maryland as such.

SEIU is the largest labor union in North America, with over 2 Million members. We unite workers in health care, public service, including public education, and property services to improve lives and the services we provide. We represent over 50,000 workers in the Maryland/DC/Virginia region.

Almost all our members in the private sector, almost one million women and men, have the right to strike. That right, or economic tool, is very seldom used, but often very effective in bringing about a fair settlement to collective bargaining negotiations.

Thousands of SEIU members in the public sector also have this right. I spent five years in the State of Oregon and have personally seen how effective this tool can be. We negotiated scores of collective bargaining agreements every year. We came close to striking several times, but seldom did a strike occur. Why?

Some may believe that workers are just waiting for the soonest opportunity to strike. My experience is that view is without merit. Very, very few workers are anxious to give up their pay, by walking off the job. Only for the most important reasons will workers vote to go on strike and very often those strikes are of short duration. Much more often the existence of the strike option serves as the pressure, on both parties, to bring about a settlement.

We ask for your careful consideration of this bill and anticipate you giving it a FAVORABLE REPORT. Thank you.