

HB 65 Anita Bass testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV



HB 65 - SUPPORT
Maryland County Public Library Systems'
Employee Collective Bargaining Rights

January 31, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and distinguished members of this committee, especially my own representative Delegate Metzgar.

My name is Anita Bass. I had the pleasure of testifying before many of you during the 2021 session when I spoke in favor of the collective bargaining legislation for Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL). I come before you as the first Local Lodge President of BCPL-IAM United.

Having the ability to form a union and negotiate our first contract wasn't easy. BCPL staff worked with the IAM for three years. A large part of this extended timeline was having to pass legislation before we could have the hope of filing for a union election. We had the interest among the staff, but we didn't have a legal process to be able to bargain an enforceable contract addressing our wages, hours, and working conditions.

In our first contract, we negotiated wage increases, improved benefits for our part-time staff, and created a Labor-Management Committee to address issues in the workplace. Having a union isn't a promise of perfection, but it is an avenue for staff to have a voice and participate in the process.

Now, we are in the midst of negotiating our second contract. It has been a learning process for both the union and management, but we are committed to working together for the best library system possible.

House Bill 65 will provide a uniform and consistent process for my colleagues in other county library systems to organize for collective bargaining rights, if they so choose. Library workers without an interest in organizing a union will not be affected.

Libraries are cornerstones of our communities. Our work goes beyond helping a patron find a book. As frontline service providers we have an important perspective. Union representation gives us a seat at the table and an avenue to make the library better for our employees and the customers.

Unionizing may not be what every library system wants. That's fine. HB 65 doesn't make libraries union unless and until they choose to organize and win an election. For those systems who want to become union, HB 65 removes the need to repeat this legislative process piece by piece, county by county, session after session, over and over again.

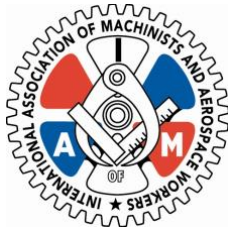
On behalf of library workers across Maryland, I ask you to vote favorable on House Bill 65.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

HB 65 B Fitzgerald.pdf

Uploaded by: Bridget Fitzgerald

Position: FAV



HB 65 - SUPPORT
BRIDGET FITZGERALD
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
bfitzgerald@iamaw.org | (301) 213-4189

HB 65 - SUPPORT
Maryland County Public Library Systems'
Employee Collective Bargaining Rights

January 31, 2023

To the honorable Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the House Appropriations Committee.

My name is Bridget Fitzgerald. I am a union organizer with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). I have testified before this committee in previous sessions to help public library workers pass enabling legislation for collective bargaining rights. I'm honored to be able to submit written testimony in favor of House Bill 65 (HB 65).

In 2019, I was asked to meet with a group of library workers from Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL). They had questions about what a union does and how it would apply to their workplace. We met for what was a very long and detailed conversation. That began my association with library workers and the inner-workings of the public library system.

At the time, we were unaware that legislation had to be passed by the Maryland General Assembly in order for these workers to proceed. We did our research and met with Baltimore County leaders to determine the necessary course of action. When we presented the plan to the library staff, they remained committed, so we proceeded.

The BCPL campaign received a lot of attention. There were stories in the paper, social media traffic and conversations between colleagues in different library systems. As a result, I began receiving calls from library workers from other county library systems.

Like BCPL staff, the workers in other counties had a lot of questions. Most notably was the question regarding legislation. They wanted to know if they had to follow the same legislative process or questioned why they had to pass a law if one was passed in the 2021. This topic of conversation caused a lot of stress, as many feared public attention.

I did speak with a worker from Howard County. This county is an exception, as in 2013 a law that applied to these workers was passed. I discussed the specifics of this law and the process. Most objectionable was the law applying only to full-time staff, when half the employees were part-time, and the requirement for the library director to receive a petition with the signatures of all staff supporting interest for a union election. This worker felt staff would be too exposed, thus halting their efforts before they began. I've since been in contact with this worker to provide information regarding HB 65 and possible changes to Howard County's law. This worker advised that he/she and a few other interested colleagues have since left the library system. They didn't want to continue in an environment without a voice, and chose to find employment elsewhere.

I wholeheartedly believe that there are public library workers across the state of Maryland that would like to explore forming a union, but feel overwhelmed by the idea of needing legislation to pass, especially when it

could take more than one session for a bill to pass into law. As a result, library systems are losing valuable employees.

Passing HB 65 will provide a fair and consistent process for employees of any non-unionized library system. If library workers of a particular system wish to organize, the law will lay out the requirements of showing interest and conducting the election. If the employees do not wish to engage in this process, there is no requirement to do so.

Please give library workers access to their rights and an opportunity to have a voice. I respectfully request you vote favorable on HB 65.

Thank you,

Bridget Fitzgerald

Maryland Voter, District 30B

HB 65 charlotte Malerich.pdf

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Position: FAV

12/16/22

I'm writing to express my support, as a library worker, to extend collective bargaining rights to all public library workers in Maryland.

It's not often acknowledged in the wider community that we are not only providers of information, but also caregivers and social workers. The "librarian" (who may not even have a degree in Library Science) is frequently the most consistent and reliable presence in the life of isolated and vulnerable members of our community. For seniors with limited mobility, for adolescents who need a safe place to go outside school, for people experiencing homelessness, the library is a refuge with no price of admission or embarrassing intake process.

For all the importance of maintaining this space and the books and resources in it, library workers receive very little institutional support. I know because I have worked in public libraries since 1999, and at Arlington Public Libraries in Virginia since 2007. Now more than ever our wages don't keep pace with inflation, while new duties are added to our job description at the drop of a pin (distributing Covid tests, acting as tech tutors and troubleshooters for online learning, and de-escalating anti-LGBTQ+ demonstrations, to name a few). Three of my coworkers have been homeless themselves, unable to afford rent in the DMV, while others have to choose between continuing to work and paying most of their income to childcare, or quitting and raising a family on a spouse's income. 80 of my coworkers were summarily furloughed in 2020; of these, the 20 with a professional degree were laid off one year later with a mass email that their "services would no longer be needed."

Like others in the helping professions, library workers experience stress and trauma when our patrons bring their own pain through our doors.¹ And like other care workers, we have felt unprecedented levels of job burnout in the years since Covid-19.² The best way to combat this? Make it easy to unionize. Unionization breaks the social isolation that characterizes burnout. Having a say in one's schedule, workload, assignments, pay, and benefits, supported by a collective bargaining agreement and a clear grievance process, fosters the sense of control and autonomy that a healthy worker needs.³

Library workers should have this right fully recognized and guaranteed under state law. In Virginia, the state assembly has taken a similar piecemeal approach that Maryland is taking, requiring library workers to work through a local legislative process before even holding a union

¹ Albanese, Andrew. "Groundbreaking Study Explores Trauma, Stress in Frontline Library Workers." Publishers Weekly. <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/89798-groundbreaking-new-study-explores-trauma-stress-in-frontline-library-workers.html>. July 07, 2022. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

² Abramson, Ashley. "Burnout and stress are everywhere." American Psychological Association. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>. January 1, 2022. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

³ "Job burnout: How to spot it and take action." Mayo Clinic Staff. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

election. In Arlington this has set us back years in the unionization process. For overwhelmed librarians who need relief and hope now, that's untenable. But my colleagues in Maryland could get the support that my coworkers and I in Virginia haven't had, if the General Assembly passes the proposed bill.

Sincerely,
Charlotte Malerich

Views expressed are my own and do not represent that of my employer.

HB 65 chase zaslannya.pdf

Uploaded by: Bridget Fitzgerald

Position: FAV

12/26/22

I'm writing to express my support, as a charter school teacher, for extending collective bargaining rights to all public library workers in Maryland.

As a fellow education worker without a union to represent my interests, I understand on a personal level just how badly library workers in Maryland need collective bargaining rights. Public school teachers, and many other library workers across the country, won collective bargaining rights decades ago. There is no excuse to force library workers into jumping through local hoops every time they want to even decide if they want a union to represent them.

For all the importance of maintaining libraries and the books and resources in them, library workers receive very little institutional support. Now more than ever their wages don't keep pace with inflation, while new duties are added to their job description at the drop of a pin (distributing Covid tests, acting as tech tutors and troubleshooters for online learning, and de-escalating anti-LGBTQ+ demonstrations, to name a few).

Like others in the caring professions, library workers experience stress and trauma when patrons bring their own pain through library doors.¹ And like other care workers, they have felt unprecedented levels of job burnout in the years since Covid-19.² The best way to combat this? Make it easy to unionize. Unionization breaks the social isolation that characterizes burnout. Having a say in one's schedule, workload, assignments, pay, and benefits, supported by a collective bargaining agreement and a clear grievance process, fosters the sense of control and autonomy that a healthy worker needs.³

As a charter school worker, I deal with many of the same issues library workers do. I believe that an injury to one is an injury to all, so even though I do not work in public libraries, I feel their pain and strongly urge for collective bargaining rights to be extended to ALL public library workers in Maryland.

Sincerely,
Chase Zaslannya

¹ Albanese, Andrew. "Groundbreaking Study Explores Trauma, Stress in Frontline Library Workers." Publishers Weekly. <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/89798-groundbreaking-new-study-explores-trauma-stress-in-frontline-library-workers.html>. July 07, 2022. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

² Abramson, Ashley. "Burnout and stress are everywhere." American Psychological Association. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>. January 1, 2022. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

³ "Job burnout: How to spot it and take action." Mayo Clinic Staff. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>. Accessed Dec 14, 2022.

HB 65 Colleen Martin.pdf

Uploaded by: Bridget Fitzgerald

Position: FAV

January 14, 2023

Honorable Delegates,

My name is Colleen Martin and though my residence is in Pennsylvania and I am thus not a Maryland voter, my ties to the state run deep. I married into a family with roots in Harford County that span generations and I have been an employee of the Harford County Public Library for almost 20 years. Because I'm one of the few people within HCPL with that kind of tenure, I'm also one of the few who remember what the system was like before the current administration came to power more than a decade ago. I can say unequivocally that the changes these administrators have implemented without staff or public input regarding the way our library operates have been detrimental to our standing in the community. I firmly believe that, had staff been afforded the respect they deserve and empowered to participate in the decision-making process throughout the years, we would not find ourselves in such dire straits. That is why I'm writing to you today, to ask that you support House Bill 0065 – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining.

HCPL staff have a deep sense of pride in the high level of service we provide to our patrons in all manner of inquiries, but we are being hamstrung in our ability to do our jobs by our own administration. We once had the autonomy to entice people to our individual branches by offering programs and services catered specifically to that community's needs, but those creative freedoms have been taken from us, the tasks centralized and mandated by a small group of people with no library background or experience in program development. Decades upon decades of collective staff knowledge matter for naught – in fact, nearly a quarter of staff (mostly those that work in branches) were recently demoted and told that they had been “overvalued” by the previous administration.

Because of this stifling atmosphere, the system has been hemorrhaging workers, a crisis that predated the COVID-19 pandemic by several years. Employees leave, either through retirement (early or otherwise) or resignation, as quickly as administration can fill vacancies. I cannot stress enough how unusual this is. HCPL used to have a reputation as one of the top library systems not only in the state but in the country, and job openings were rare and highly coveted. The fact that turnover has sky-rocketed as it has in the last ten years and we can no longer count on people staying for any length of time is telling.

The few of us who remain and remember a time before the disastrous changes the current administration has implemented are finding our situations more and more untenable. We have gone to

our Board of Trustees, which ostensibly oversees library operations and the administrators, to ask for help, but they merely pay lip-service to hearing our grievances. We have no true recourse to affect change and instead are told, "If you don't like it here, then leave." But we don't want to leave. We know how vital a public library is to its community; we know what we can accomplish when all branches and departments work in harmony with each other. But the only way to reestablish that equilibrium within Harford County Public Library is to ensure that we employees have a voice. And the only way to ensure that we have a voice is to pass HB0065. Please help us accomplish this.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Colleen Martin

274 W. Woodbine Rd

Fawn Grove, PA 17321

lil_red_ccc@hotmail.com

HB 65 Jaimie Caldwell.pdf

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Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

January 31, 2023

H.B. 65 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jaimie Caldwell, I am a Maryland voter, I grew up using the Harford County Public Library, and still frequent their branches and use their resources. I started my career in librarianship at Enoch Pratt Free Library under the leadership of Carla Hayden, and now work for Baltimore County Public Library. Libraries have been instrumental in my development as a child and teen, and have provided me a stable career in social justice. I support HB 65, as it will make Maryland libraries stronger, more equitable, and better equipped to meet the needs of their employees, thus making the library better equipped to meet the needs of the community.

Sincerely,

Jaimie Caldwell

HB 65 Kori Hoene.pdf

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Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

January 31, 2023

H.B. 65 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining

Dear Delegation,

As an employee of Harford County Public Library & a Maryland resident, I ask for your support of HB 65.

Libraries continue to be vital to the communities they serve and provide more than just books.

As they keep adding programs & services, staff is expected to do more and more.

However, the value of those staff members have diminished both in pay and input.

Finding out that employees of a library system do not automatically have the right to unionize if they so choose is another demoralizing blow.

Please help us by passing HB 65. Thank you for listening to your constituents.

Sincerely,

Kori Hoene
Library Associate II @
Darlington Branch of HCPL
and resident of Churchville, MD

Vangrin Written Testimony 2023[1].pdf

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Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

January 31, 2023

H.B. 65 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining

My name is Bethany Vangrin, and I am a resident of Harford County. For the past 16 years, I have proudly worked for the Harford County Public Library and currently hold the position of Children's Librarian at the Bel Air Branch. I'm writing to voice my support for House Bill 65 in favor of collective bargaining for the State of Maryland public libraries.

During my tenure with Harford County Public Library, I've had the pleasure to serve on statewide library book award committees, present at several Maryland Library Association annual conferences, and participate in numerous statewide trainings and meetings. Through these opportunities, I have met and witnessed the dedicated staff working to better their customer's experiences within public libraries across Maryland.

The public library is where the public goes for informational needs or their next book to read, but we also provide enrichment, education, and enjoyment for all ages. Day in and day out, library workers provide valuable services to all who visit a local library branch and beyond. In Harford County alone, a library visitor can apply for a US Passport, discover 3D printing with their child, explore their ancestors in our local history room, and check out a ukulele, all without leaving the walls of the Bel Air Library. Throughout a visit to a library branch, the public will encounter a library employee who will use their experience and expertise to make the customer's visit successful. However, the lack of legislation prevents the same library employee, who used their training and education to assist the library visitor, from exercising their Constitutional right to form a union and collectively bargain without a lengthy legislative process.

The time is right for the passage of HB65. As workers in the public sector, many library employees struggle to have their voices heard by their administration. We encounter more and more pressure to accomplish work duties with less support due to the elimination of positions and resources. For instance, in the Harford County system alone, our library system has eliminated the Children's and Teen Coordinator, the Volunteer Coordinator, and Programming Specialist within the past five years. The loss of these positions has added stress on employees as tasks from the vacant positions are reallocated to lower-level positions without compensation or reevaluation of job descriptions. For instance, in 2019, I was asked to fill in as the Acting Chairperson of the system's Early Literacy Team due to the Children's and Teen Coordinator vacancy. It's 2023, and I still serve as the team's "acting" chairperson with no end date in sight. Although I am dedicated to leading this team, it does unfairly add responsibilities and duties to my workload. It may be too late to reinstate the eliminated positions. However, the passing of this collective bargaining legislation allows public library employees to have a voice in future decisions impacting their workload.

A union is the best pathway to allowing employees' voices to be heard. I am asking for a favorable report on HB65 to ensure the right to unionize and collectively bargain for public library employees across the State of Maryland.

Thank you for your time.

Bethany Vangrin

HB65_MSEA_Gobel_FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 65
Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining**

**Appropriations Committee
January 31, 2023**

**Christian Gobel
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 65. HB 65 grants employees of certain public libraries the freedom to form, join, and participate in an employee organization and to engage in activities related to collective bargaining. MSEA supports all legislation that expands and enhances collective bargaining rights for public employees. MSEA stands in solidarity with all unions in the labor movement to build worker power and ensure that all workers have a voice in their workplace.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

HB 65 is common sense legislation to promote workers' rights for employees of certain public libraries. The bill enables employees to engage in protected concerted activities for their mutual aid and protection, prohibits employers and employee organizations from engaging in certain unfair labor practices, establishes election procedures for the certification of exclusive representatives, and requires good faith bargaining between employers and certified exclusive representatives concerning wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

MSEA strongly believes that communities, government, the public, and workers benefit through the practice and procedure of collective bargaining. Enabling workers to have a voice in their workplace and working conditions enhances the



delivery of public services, creates a more stable and healthier workforce, and allows labor and management to address potential disputes in a responsible and efficient manner for the benefit of all. For these reasons, MSEA will always stand in solidarity with workers who seek the right to join unions and engage in collective bargaining. We urge passage of this legislation and look forward to welcoming these workers into the broader Maryland labor movement.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 65.

HB65 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bar

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Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

HB65 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining House Appropriations Committee January 31, 2023

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 65 as currently written. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 provided millions of workers with the right to form unions and collectively bargain with their employers. It also established that the official policy of the United States was to promote collective bargaining and worker organizing. This was recently re-established by President Joe Biden, who issued Executive Order 14025, which stated, "the policy of the United States is to encourage worker organizing and collective bargaining and to promote equality of bargaining power between employers and employees." Unfortunately, millions of workers were left out from the National Labor Relations Act, leaving them without a legal process for their human right to form a union. Those excluded workers include thousands of public sector library workers across the state of Maryland.

House Bill 65 grants collective bargaining rights to public library workers across the state. It establishes an equitable process for workers to democratically select exclusive representatives that can bargain with employers over terms and conditions of employment. HB 65 does not require library workers to join a union, but creates a fair process with neutral arbiters, to certify representatives if the workers choose to unionize.

Past bills granting public library workers union rights focused on single counties or library systems, but this disjointed approach is time consuming and treats workers' essential rights like something they need to beg for from the state of Maryland before they can exercise it. HB 65 makes it clear that the State of Maryland values the rights of public library workers to exercise their freedom. HB 65 does not change the labor laws for library systems that already have collective bargaining, like those of Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Baltimore City (Enoch Pratt), and Baltimore County.



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Collective bargaining is an important tool for workers in the fight for equity, social justice, and inclusion. Library workers are overwhelmingly women. The AFL-CIO's Department of Professional Employees (DPE) analyzed 2020 Census Bureau data and found that over 83% of librarians were women. Even within the profession women have been discriminated against in terms of pay and benefits, with women earning only 81.5% of what men in the same positions made. Union contracts are an essential part of the fight against the gender pay gap, helping to ensure that workers receive equal pay for equal work. DPE reported that union librarians earned around \$284 more per week than their non-union counterparts.

Maryland library workers have shown tremendous interest in organizing unions. Workers at Baltimore County Public Libraries voted to approve their first collective bargaining agreement in May 2022. Just a few months ago, workers at the Enoch Pratt Library System in Baltimore City voted 218-12 in favor of forming a union.

This bill sends a strong message to public library workers that their rights are respected and they have the freedom, supported by their state, to join together in a union and negotiate with their employers if they so choose.

We strongly encourage legislators to support HB65 as written.

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Uploaded by: Dyana Forester

Position: FAV



Metro Washington Labor Council, AFL-CIO

815 Black Lives Matter Plaza NW • Washington, DC 20006 • 202-974-8150 • 202-974-8152 fax
An AFL-CIO "Union City"

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19 January 2023

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Dear Delegate:

On behalf of the 150,000 active and retired members of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO (MWC), I write to you today urging your support for **Maryland H.B. 65**, legislation that would enable Maryland's county public library workers to organize for collective bargaining rights. Unfortunately, the current state laws do not provide such a pathway for thousands in the state's workforce to exercise their constitutional right to join a union.

Collective bargaining is not only necessary because it is a constitutional right. It also provides pathways for workers to work their way into America's Middle Class. In addition, workers can access better healthcare, paid family leave, and other benefits that help support themselves and their families. This legislation does not guarantee union organizing or require library employees to form a union. Instead, it provides currently unorganized workers the necessary steps to show interest in a vote to have union representation, should they wish to do so.

House Bill 65 is also directly aligned with Governor Moore's "Work, Wages and Wealth" platform. This legislation ensures that workers understand and agree with the terms of their employment and can negotiate their wages on an objective and measurable scale. However, collective bargaining does benefit not only the employee but also the employer.

That said, I write to you today to request that you support H.B. 65 and give unorganized county public library workers the option to bargain collectively. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with Metro Washington Council Legislative & Political Director Dejah Desiree Williams, MPP, at 202-705-2077 or dejahdesiree.williams@dclabor.org.

In Solidarity,

Dyana Forester

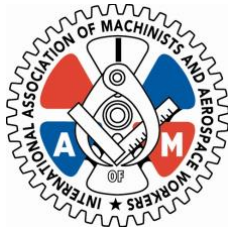
President

Bringing Labor Together Since 1896
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2023 01 25_Testimony of Laura Ewan_DRAFT[2].pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Ewan

Position: FAV



HB 65 - SUPPORT

Laura Ewan

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

lewan@iamaw.org | (301) 967-4510

HB 65 - SUPPORT

Maryland County Public Library Systems' Employee Collective Bargaining Rights

January 31, 2023

My name is Laura Ewan, and I am Associate General Counsel for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). I am honored to be here today speaking to you about H.B. 65, a crucial piece of legislation that will grant the employees of many of Maryland's County Public Library Systems the right to select a representative of their choosing to bargain on their behalf for their wages, hours, and working conditions.

In Maryland, each county library system exists as a creature of state statute. State law governing library structure and operations allows for boards of trustees or county governments to operate library systems and set wages, hours, and working conditions. However, the state laws do not automatically grant these entities the right to enter into binding collective bargaining agreements **absent a grant of such authority from the legislature**. That's what H.B. 65 would do—grant that authority to each County's Library employing authority to enter into a collective bargaining agreement, should the Library employees vote to be represented by a union.

Employees who work so hard to provide the numerous services that our libraries offer to the community want a voice in the conversations about the direction of the workplace. They want a seat at the table because they love their jobs. And they want meaningful representation to ensure that it stays that way. That is why we enthusiastically support this bill.

For some historical perspective, Prince Georges County Library System, Montgomery County Library System, Baltimore County Public Library System, Howard County Library System, and the Enoch Pratt Library System have all undertaken steps to allow for their library employees to be represented for purposes of collective bargaining. Prince Georges County and Montgomery County have established relationships with unions for their employees. Baltimore County's Library System employees secured their first contract last year. But having to do this on a county-by-county basis across Maryland is ineffective, inefficient, and ultimately asking for inconsistencies in how Library employees gain representation.

Instead, it just makes sense—for your busy schedules, and for these employees—to address the issue statewide. H.B. 65 does just that. It follows in the footsteps of the recently-enacted Baltimore County Public Library System legislation that made contract negotiations possible, while borrowing from language used across County collective bargaining laws across Maryland. And it excludes the counties with already existing collective bargaining laws and union representation from this Bill.

This is a common-sense approach that guarantees access to the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association. Yet there are those who oppose it. For example, during last year's Legislative Session, we

proposed legislation initially tailored for Harford County Public Library employees. During that session, we heard from opponents of granting public employees the right to collectively bargain. They said that there's no law **prohibiting** employees from forming a union, so therefore this legislation is unnecessary. But that talking point demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding about the reasons employees seek out union representation. Without that grant of authority from this Legislature to enter into collective bargaining agreements, an employee union cannot bargain with the employer about wages, hours, or working conditions. So what exactly would it be able to do?

This session, we're hearing from library management representatives that any legislation passed should borrow from Howard County's library employee collective bargaining law. While Howard County passed enabling legislation through this Legislative body, no union has organized that county's employees—which has **everything** to do with how the law is written. The law preemptively divides the group in different units, and is overly restrictive on the rights employees retain. But its biggest problem is how employees can actually start the process to obtain union representation. The Howard County law **requires** that a union seeking to represent the employees turn over to the employer a petition with signatures of employees who support the effort. In other words, employees have to out themselves as supporting the union before they have any of the protections of being represented by a union. **While the law itself prohibits “discrimination” from putting one's name on the petition, it's still asking employees to openly tell their employer that they personally want to vote on union representation, instead of letting them collectively speak through their vote for the union (or not) in a secret ballot election, as is done in every other representational forum.** No employee should be forced to voice their support or opposition to a union **to their employer**—particularly where, as we have seen firsthand in the news over the last few years in all different industries and sectors, so many employers actively oppose employees exercising their right to join a union and collectively bargain. H.B. 65 addresses these shortcomings, just like the Baltimore County legislation passed before it.

After our success of getting legislation passed for the Baltimore County employees, workers from many Maryland counties came to the IAM and asked us to do the same for them. When workers come to us for help, we respond. We drafted H.B. 65 after carefully studying existing county bargaining laws to ensure consistency, while borrowing largely from the recently passed Baltimore County legislation.

Maryland library employees need this bill passed just to have the opportunity to vote to see if they want to have a representative for collective bargaining purposes. Every single library employee we have spoken to sees this as an opportunity to make the job they love even better. These workers provide critical social and cultural services to Maryland residents, and all they ask is for the opportunity to have a collective voice at the table.

We ask you to vote in favor of this bill so library employees across Maryland can have the legal right and the freedom to choose whether they wish to be represented by a union or not for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Thank you.

HB 65 Megan Baker testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Baker

Position: FAV



HB 65 - SUPPORT
Maryland County Public Library Systems'
Employee Collective Bargaining Rights

January 31, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and committee members. My name is Megan Baker and I am a staff member of a library system in Maryland where we do not have the right to form a union and collectively bargain with our employer. I am here today to urge you to support House Bill 65 (HB65).

A week from today, February 7th, will be 18 years that I've been employed at my current library system. And I can honestly say that over the past several years and pre-dating the COVID-19 pandemic, I have witnessed firsthand a severe decline in our working conditions, overall job satisfaction, and employee morale, specifically for non-management employees. What used to be an innovative work environment that operated on a "lead from any position" approach has eroded due to library leadership's lack of respect for its staff, poor communication, failure to properly address staff concerns, and an overall feeling of distrust.

"If you don't like it here, then leave." That is the response that has been given to those of us who have tried to bring our concerns to the attention of library administrators. A significant number of staff have also shared various issues with our Board of Trustees, only to be met with little to no action. Meanwhile, people have indeed left...so many dedicated and talented coworkers who decided to continue their library careers elsewhere.

Non-management staff make up the majority of the library's workforce, yet we currently have no power when it comes to making decisions that directly affect us. Instead, we're expected to trust our library leadership "no questions asked." I believe even just the possibility of having a union will change that. And personally, I'd rather try to fix the parts of my workplace that are broken than leave a job that I love.

A few years ago, some of my colleagues and I heard about Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) staff's efforts to organize. As we followed their process in the news, many of us felt a real connection to their experiences and this became a glimmer of hope that maybe we could do the same. As is true for many library workers, we really do love our jobs and take a great amount of pride in what we do. Ultimately, we simply want to use our collective voice to improve our workplace.

Last year, we worked with IAM and Delegate Steve Johnson on proposed legislation for our county that was ultimately unsuccessful. While we were all very disappointed and frustrated, we were determined to try again next session.

My coworkers and I are like so many other library workers across Maryland. We love our jobs, we love serving our communities, and building relationships with our customers. We want valued, innovative libraries, just like management. But, for that to happen, the workers need a seat at the table and a voice in the room. We need to feel confident that our ideas and concerns will be heard. A union will give us that confidence and a means to negotiate our working conditions.

As it stands today, there are only four counties in Maryland with legislation in place that enables library workers to unionize. HB65 will remedy this and extend the right to organize to all county-based library workers throughout the state.

Most importantly, passing HB65 will allow all Maryland library workers to make that choice for themselves without having to go through their own legislative process that could potentially take years.

In the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, we are all given the fundamental right of freedom of association. The right to unionize one's workplace is recognized by U.S. Courts as part of that fundamental right. This is not something that should be affected by party politics. Passing HB65 would simply define the necessary steps for staff to unionize SHOULD internal efforts continue to fail. It is a pathway for my coworkers and I, as well as library workers throughout the state, to exercise our Constitutionally protected right if we choose to do so.

And that is what has brought me here today, seeking your assistance. I ask this committee to support library workers throughout this great state by offering a favorable report on HB65.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your consideration.

Education - Public Libraries- Collective

Uploaded by: Olszewski, Jr. John

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 65**

TITLE: Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining

SPONSOR: Delegate S. Johnson

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: January 31, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 65 – Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining. This legislation grants organizing and collective bargaining rights to public library employees throughout the State of Maryland.

County Executive John Olszewski is an avid supporter of the empowerment of workers through collective bargaining, and recognizes that unions are the backbone of a strong middle class. Collective bargaining is a vital tool for working families to get a seat at the table and advocate for stronger working conditions with one voice. In 2021, the State successfully passed legislation allowing employees of the Baltimore County Public Library System to collectively bargain. Last year, BCPL employees ratified their first-ever contract with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. This legislation would provide a uniform system for library employees across the State to collectively bargain and form a union.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 65. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB 65 IP letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Martinez

Position: FAV



January 12, 2023

Dear Delegate:

On behalf of the 600,000 active and retired members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), **I write to you today urging your support for Maryland H.B. 65, legislation that would enable Maryland's county public library workers to organize for collective bargaining rights.** The current state laws **do not** provide such a pathway for thousands in the state's workforce to exercise their constitutional right to join a union.

This proposed legislation, sponsored by Del. Steve Johnson (D-34A), would provide a consistent process for employees of unorganized public library systems in Maryland to form a union and to collectively bargain. Senator Nancy King (D-39) has agreed to co-sponsor the legislation in the Senate.

This legislation does not guarantee union organizing or require library system employees to form a union. H.B. 65 simply provides currently unorganized workers the necessary steps to show interest for a vote to have union representation, should they wish to do so.

As some may know, the IAM proudly represents a very diverse workforce that includes about 460 workers of the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) system. The group, which organized with the IAM, ratified a first collective bargaining agreement in 2022. The workers only gained this right because the IAM was successful with getting state legislation passed in 2021 that enabled the BCPL workers the right to collectively bargain.

The plight of BCPL workers seeking a pathway to organize also gained the attention of President Joe Biden, who invited a BCPL members to speak before the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment.

Library workers in every county of Maryland should have the same ability to join a union if they choose. Library workers' ability to exercise their right to join a union in the state of Maryland should not be based on the county system in which they work, but instead on the universally-recognized right to freedom of association. This freedom should be available to any library worker who wishes to seek the option.

That said, I write to you today to request you support H.B. 65 and give unorganized county public library workers the option to collectively bargain.

If you have any questions, please contact IAM Legislative & Political Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575 or hsolomon@iamaw.org.

Sincerely,

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President

In support, with amendments, of HB65, an act conce

Uploaded by: Skip Auld

Position: FWA



**In support, with amendments, of HB65, an act concerning
Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining**

January 31, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Skip Auld. I serve as Chief Executive Officer of Anne Arundel County Public Library. I am here today in support of House Bill 65, with amendments. I am also a member of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators.

Over the past year, at the request of Chair Barnes, the Maryland library community has worked with a highly experienced labor law attorney to craft a collective bargaining bill. The idea was to develop a bill that would be acceptable to all library systems, rather than focusing on Harford County only as did last year's HB1225.

We did not know until the second week of January that Delegate Johnson was working on his own bill. We look forward to working cooperatively with him to amend HB65. If this cannot be accomplished during the session, we look forward to getting it done over the summer.

Our goal is to pass a bill that is fair to everyone, including the unions, the libraries, the communities we serve, and especially the thousands of library employees across the state. To be clear, we are not anti-union, in fact, my son is a dues-paying union member and many of us are from generations-long union families. We look forward to working closely with Delegate Johnson to get this bill right.

I personally support the bill, with amendments, despite HB65 having a fundamental misunderstanding of public libraries in Maryland. For example, it builds the legislation around the idea that the governing body is the County, when Maryland State law determined many decades ago (in the 1940s to be exact) that library boards of trustees are the governing bodies of library systems. Twenty-three (23) of the 24 library systems in Maryland have governing Boards of Trustees.

There are many other amendments that we will work together to hammer out. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Skip Auld
Chief Executive Officer

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sauld@aacpl.net

HB0065-APP_MACo_OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: UNF



House Bill 65

Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: January 31, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 65. This bill would establish a uniform statewide collective bargaining process for public library employees.

Counties oppose the one-size-fits-all approach of HB 65, which limits local decision-making. To date, jurisdictions seeking to bargain collectively have pursued single-county legislation, but HB 65 takes those provisions statewide without local input. This would create potentially unsustainable costs for counties, who provide substantial funding for public libraries and the myriad community services they provide throughout Maryland—especially since the legislation does not envision any added State support.

Maryland’s libraries do it all: they support early literacy, create collaborative spaces, connect Marylanders to technology, foster community engagement, prepare Maryland’s kids for K-12 learning, assist residents with workforce development, and serve as central resource hubs for families. Unfortunately, HB 65 could lead to a rollback of these critical functions at a time when access to these free and low-cost services is most needed. Alternatively, this bill might force some library systems to start charging Maryland residents for these services, shifting burdens onto many whose ability to pay is limited.

Current state laws include distinct collective bargaining processes for public library systems in several jurisdictions that have “opted in” to collective bargaining. As partners in the network of public libraries serving the state’s residents, county governments and library governing boards should retain the right to make labor and budgetary decisions that best suit the unique needs and capabilities of the communities they serve.

Counties are proud to support their public libraries. However, the State-imposed system and costs of HB 65 – with no additional State funding – are simply not feasible and could pose substantial budget difficulties for counties. Because this legislation would not provide local flexibility in the decision to allow collective bargaining at county public libraries, nor provide additional State support, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 65 and recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report.