



**SB 352 - SUPPORT**  
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**SB 352 - SUPPORT**  
**Maryland County Public Library Systems'**  
**Employee Collective Bargaining Rights**

February 16, 2023

To the honorable Chairpersons, Vice Chairs and members of the Senate Finance Committee and the Education, Energy and the Environment 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 Senate Bill 352 (SB 352).

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.

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 looking for similar help. In response, the IAM sought a way to help all unorganized library systems through statewide legislation.

We understood that statewide library legislation, would require a bill to incorporate language that would work for the counties. So, our Research Department and our Legal Department took an extensive look at how collective bargaining was handled in counties across the state. They also looked at the library collective bargaining laws already in effect, and of course the standard practices in labor law. The language contained within SB 352 is the result of that work.

As an organizer, I would have liked the most worker-friendly bill possible. For example, I don't believe workers should be restricted to filing for an election in one specific month. However, I was told by the bill drafters that most counties have a specified month; therefore, the most responsible approach would be to incorporate that into SB 352 to be uniform with the majority of the counties. This logical approach is what makes SB 352 a bill that will enable workers to unionize for the purposes of collective bargaining, while allowing the employer to manage the library system, the Board of Trustees to maintain their oversight and fiduciary responsibilities and includes timelines to adhere to county budgetary processes.

It's hard to please everyone when it comes to collective bargaining. Both parties want more... workers want forming a union to be easier, while employers want it be more difficult and believe they should more control. The purpose of collective bargaining laws are to define a fair process to establish interest in have a union election, the process by which that election is conducted and the steps to make negotiating collective bargaining agreements possible. SB 352 does just that.

SB 352 Favorable  
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Library employees across the state love the work they do and the communities they serve; but they also want to have the option to form a union in order to have a voice. I respectfully request you help them by issuing a favorable report on SB 352.

Thank you,

Bridget Fitzgerald

Maryland Voter, District 30B