



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 352 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining

DATE: February 16, 2023
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

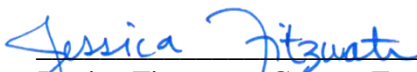
As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **SB 352 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining** a favorable report.

This bill establishes a collective bargaining process for full or part-time nonmanagement employees of public library systems in Maryland. Our constitution expresses the right for employees to collectively bargain but there are no current laws in Maryland that outline the process of doing so for library employees. SB352 addresses this gap.

Our library staff are hardworking, dedicated public servants who bring needed resources to our constituents. Should they wish to unionize, it is prudent for the state to have established a process that makes this efficient and not cumbersome. Several counties have seen their library systems organize and have had to address the gap in state policy around a collective bargaining process by passing various versions of legislation or Charter amendments. Without state guidance, each jurisdiction will likely have a different process for collective bargaining, creating a complicated patchwork of policies across the state that will not benefit employees or employers.

Public libraries serve a critical role in our communities, providing access to information, internet, meeting space, educational and cultural programs, and more. Public library staff are not only responsible for helping residents access these resources but are also often on the frontlines of public health and safety issues, responding to crises such as opioid overdoses, or distributing COVID tests and masks. In Frederick County, our library staff were also critical partners in standing up our COVID vaccination efforts. These employees are essential members of our public service team and have the right to collectively bargain as employees.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 352 and I urge a favorable report on SB 352.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD