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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 352 – Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining

February 16, 2023

Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

Senate Bill 352 is a bill about rights, choice, and equity.

Public libraries are the jewels of our counties. Our citizens appreciate their value and take full advantage of the services they offer. Although our public libraries are managed by Boards of Trustees, the bulk of their funding comes from taxpayer funds and makes library employees part of the public sector.

Senate Bill 352 is about rights. Library workers in the vast majority of Maryland's counties do not have the same rights as other public sector employees to collective bargaining. Teachers, firefighters, police, public works employees all have the ability to collectively bargain for wages, benefits, working conditions, working hours and continuation of services. Senate Bill 352 will give library employees those same rights.

This bill is also about choice. While Senate Bill 352 will establish the right to collectively bargain, it will also establish the choice of entering into a collective bargaining agreement. The library employees of each county can make the choice of whether or not they want to enter into a collective bargaining agreement.

And finally, this bill is about equity. Over eighty percent of library workers in our state are women and a large majority of these women are professionals with post-secondary and master's degrees. They along with their male counterparts are dedicated professionals who provide a great service to our communities. They deserve the same equal treatment and representation on the job that is afforded to other public sector employees.

Senate Bill 352 is about rights, choices, and equity. Our library workers deserve no less.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 352.