



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 85 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size House Ways and Means Committee February 1, 2023

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 85 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size. 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.

HB 85 repeals the outdated ban on allowing educator unions to negotiate with their employers over the number of students that can be assigned to a particular class. The current law restricts the freedom of workers to bargain over the terms and conditions of their employment. Collective bargaining is the ideal process for resolving disagreements over class size and allows educators to fully address one of the issues that matters most to them.

Every year, even more expectations are placed on Maryland's teachers, while providing them with the same or fewer resources. Average class sizes have steadily increased, increasing the amount of work educators are responsible for without additional compensation or support. Class sizes are one of the key factors in determining the working conditions that an educator will face during a school year. Banning educators from negotiating over these core issues threatens to turn even more workers away from careers in education.

Just last year, Maryland had the dishonor of being included as one of only nine states that prohibited bargaining over class sizes. Concern over class sizes is not limited to educators and their unions. Parents also wish that they had some mechanism to encourage local school boards to maintain responsible staffing levels.

We encourage a favorable report for HB 85.