

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Ryan Morris
HB 609 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act
February 13th, 2024

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations:

My name is Ryan Morris and I am a Part Time Hourly Information staff member at the Severn Branch of Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I grew up in AACPL libraries, and as a law student now, I utilize the libraries as a safe place to learn, study, and focus. Working for AACPL has been an incredible experience, but it has also opened my eyes to the threats that our libraries are facing. As a part time worker, I rely on this job to keep me afloat during my studies, but without benefits or leave, I am often left making decisions that threaten not only my future with AACPL, but my educational future as well.

Additionally, part time workers are often left out of conversations when talking about needs in the workplace. We have a serious lack of benefits and that puts a huge strain on us. We want to be a part of the conversation when decisions are being made about workers welfare, since we are critical to the welfare of these library systems. Most of all, we just want to be treated fairly and equally.

I want to be able to recommend the Library as a great place to work to my friends and family. I want to be able to tell them that it isn't just a great place to study, it's a great place to work too. I want, more than anything, for the libraries to remain available to everyone, and accessible for them too. None of this is possible without a staff that feels respected, heard, and validated. And none of that is possible without collective bargaining. Please support the Library Workers Empowerment Act, HB 609, and give library workers what they need to keep our doors open.

Ryan Morris
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