

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Joseph Doyle
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 Joseph Doyle, and I am a Library Associate at the Severn Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library System.

The difference between a workplace where I am allowed to bargain for my wages, working hours, and benefits, is hard to measure. For one, through collective bargaining over our wages, I may be able to actually rent housing in the area where I work and be a part of the community I serve. I could save more appropriately for the future. I would be able to be a more autonomous member of society.

Many people come into this profession with the idea of helping others and serving their communities, which are wonderful reasons to get into any profession. However, given the lack of input on choices made across the system, and lack of support, many folks are burnt out and leave to look for better-paying and less stressful workplaces. This is especially detrimental as our system strives for more diversity. These issues serve only to push the folks we need to keep in our branches out of the profession entirely.

If we could collectively bargain, we could be partners in the process of maintaining and securing our libraries. We would have codified structures through which we could say our piece about our needs and wants to management. We would have the backing and power of our coworkers to strengthen our requests. We would be seen and recognized with the respect that we as workers deserve. I urge you to support this legislation and allow us to meet our administrations at the bargaining table. We want libraries that work, and libraries that we are proud to work in. Together, we can make it happen. Please support HB609.

Joseph Doyle
Library Associate
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