

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Andy Yamazaki
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 Andy Yamazaki, and I am a Senior Data Specialist with Howard County Public Library System. I am writing today to urge you to support the Library Workers Empowerment Act, which would grant collective bargaining rights to library workers across the state of Maryland. It is my hope that collective bargaining will help make my home life manageable in an increasingly inflated and financially challenging world to exist in.

The stress of our jobs does not stop at the front door. Many staff members carry home the stress and anxiety from the many concerns at work. Without a voice at the table, the interests of those working “in the trenches,” so to speak, are not heard. The effect is that we often feel unseen, and our challenges are not understood.

The fact is that Libraries are a critical part of our society. The staff of each library provide services that are indispensable. Without collective bargaining rights, the interests of the staff will never be heard, let alone addressed. We love our patrons, we love the library, and we love the society in which we live. Without a union, the staff that provide said services will slowly waste away, leading to dire circumstances for all. If we want to ensure that our libraries are around for the generations that come after us, we need to be able to advocate on behalf of the people that keep them running. We need to be able to advocate on behalf of ourselves.

Andy Yamazaki

Senior Data Specialist

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