

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Jeremy Riga, member, AFSCME Maryland
HB 260 – AN ACT concerning State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Supervisory
Employees
January 26th, 2024

SUPPORT

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

My name is Jeremy Riga and I am a proud member of AFSCME. I ask you to support HB 260. I work at the Department of Social Services as a Family Investment Specialist Supervisor.

Currently as a supervisor we wear many hats. We do frontline work alongside our staff in the state bargaining unit, and we do supervisory work in our offices and agencies.

I often feel overwhelmed and under-resourced in my role as a supervisor. When I was promoted into my position, I wasn't given any formal training on my new responsibilities or in best practices on how to supervise my staff. Instead I have had to adapt as situations arise and learn from coworkers and available managers who took time and resources to ensure I knew how best to succeed in my role. Unfortunately we cannot rely on the spare generosity of co workers to support us. We have to create consistent and formal standards for training.

HB 260 would solve this problem, because we would be able to bargain for the support we need to do our supervisory work well. Being able to negotiate over things like our onboarding, training, and other support wouldn't just improve our working conditions as supervisors, it would improve the functioning of our agencies and offices as well.

We know that the state is in a staffing crisis and that retention in our agencies needs to be improved. We as supervisors are extremely well-positioned to help tackle the retention crisis and we know we'll be more empowered to do so with full collective bargaining rights. Being able to bargain over the support we need to succeed as supervisors and the working conditions to improve our agencies is crucial to addressing the retention crisis head-on. Supervisors are ready to do our part. We need your support. We need collective bargaining rights.

For these reasons, I ask you again to please support HB 260. Thank you for your time.

Jeremy Riga
Family Investment Specialist Supervisor
DSS