

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Brad Noble, 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 Brad Noble and I am a proud member of AFSCME. I ask you to support HB 260. I've worked at Maryland Correctional Training Center as a Correctional Dietary Supervisor for 23 years.

As supervisors we understand better than anyone the policies that make for a good workplace and what it will take to keep valuable employees in our state agencies. Better policies also keep frontline staff, both supervisors and the people we oversee, safe and reduce burnout. It weakens morale and employee buy-in to enforce policies we don't believe in or understand, particularly when we work in high demand, high stress positions.

To share just one example, right now I'm required to write an officer up for growing a beard and to enforce discipline against that employee for their appearance. This feels arbitrary, and it doesn't do anything to keep our workplace safer. This kind of discipline isn't a good use of my time as a supervisor, and it contributes to the frustration and disrespect our employees feel. If we want to retain staff, we have to be sensible about what we're doing to build a workplace culture of respect that keeps them here.

Supervisors need the ability to sit at the table with management, through Labor/Management Committees (LMCs), and have an established process by which we lift up issues and find solutions together. LMCs foster a respectful and thoughtful dialogue between frontline staff and those charged with leading institutions to ensure lasting improvements for both management and staff. This process only comes with collective bargaining.

We want to be partners in helping retain and recruit high quality employees to keep our state running at the highest level- but we aren't being empowered to do that without collective bargaining rights. For these reasons, I ask you to please support HB 260.

Brad Noble
Correctional Dietary Supervisor
Maryland Correctional Training Center