

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Larra Cuffley
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 Laura Cuffley, and I am a Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist at the Glenwood branch of the Howard County Library System. I am writing to urge you to pass HB 609, which would give library workers the right to collectively bargain.

For me, the disparity of expectation between adult & children’s instructional staff is a constant issue. We regularly teach 8-10 classes per month, plus outreach and school visits, as well as special committee projects. If we speak up, we are often made to feel ashamed for having said anything at all. This is largely due to inconsistent or non-existent continuing education training or personnel development training. All of this contributes to a very high turnover of staff due to inflexible policy and top- down decisions.

Our home life is impacted significantly as well. We often work 7 day work weeks and have limited leave approval, even with more than sufficient PTO.

I am very tired. I am tired of us having our voices silenced continuously by coercion. I’m tired of not seeing my family, because I am working every weekend. I think there should be complete transparency in decisions affecting staff and that staff should be valued enough to have significant input before changes are enacted. I believe all of this can be achieved through collective bargaining. I urge you to pass this bill.

Larra Cuffley

Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist

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