

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Jill Rodenburg
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 Jill Rodenburg, and I am a Library Associate II at the Mountain Road branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I have been full time for the last ten years, and though I have worked twelve total, my full time years are the only ones that are counted. Preparing for retirement has proven difficult, both as the cost of living has soared, and as my job has been unable to keep up.

Speaking from a smaller branch perspective, we have many of the same programming requirements as a larger branch but have to do it with a smaller staff. That means overworked employees. This leaves less time for training, Continuing Education Units, and other job tasks. Also at the smaller branches, many jobs need to be done by staff with lower job titles. This sort of misclassification means there is a lack of clarity, but also a lack of fairness when it comes to how our jobs are treated.

I was the Staff Association Chair during the pandemic, we tried to address many issues and sometimes were successful, but often we had to fight hard to get management to listen. We told them there is a communication gap between employees and management. It's hard to build trust in a situation like that. Instead, good faith collective bargaining would give us the power to approach each other honestly and fairly. This is what HB 609 can accomplish, what you all can accomplish, if you pass this bill.

Jill Rodenburg
Library Associate II
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