

HB 609 in Senate Finance B Fitzgerald.pdf

Uploaded by: Bridget Fitzgerald

Position: FAV

Greetings Chairwoman Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier and the members of this committee.

My name is Bridget Fitzgerald. I am an organizer with the Machinists Union. Since 2019, I've been working to help public library staff gain the right to form a union and collectively bargain with their employer.

The Machinists, along with our Maryland labor allies, have heard the experiences of the library systems' frontline public employees. Their stories are rooted in frustration, because they feel their input based on experience is dismissed and their ideas to enhance and improve programming are ignored.

Universally, library staff love the work they do. They are filled with a sense of pride when they can help students find resources, seniors navigate the internet, unemployed people submit job applications and of course create a safe space for members of every community.

To be honest, I'm in awe at how much they do and how much they give. In return, they are asking to be in partnership with management. They want the chance to have a seat at the table and a voice in the workplace. Passing HB 609, doesn't automatically make unorganized library systems union, but it gives staff the opportunity to navigate a consistent and fair process, if they want to try. They will still need to be successful in having a majority of their coworkers wanting a union in order to gain representation – just like workers who organize under other labor laws.

As I said, I started working with library staff in 2019 when Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) workers expressed an interest in organizing. Today, BCPL has ratified their third contract. They have productive labor management committee meetings on a monthly basis to proactively identify and resolve issues. In addition, BCPL's representational environment provides employees the opportunity and support to reach their full potential. In short, BCPL is a better place to work and the community benefits.

House Bill 609 was amended under the House Appropriates Committee to accommodate the library administration's main concerns. It passed the House with bi-partisan support and now comes before this committee. I hope you will stand with Maryland's Public Library employees by issuing a favorable report on HB 609.

I thank you for your time and welcome any question.

HB0609_Library_Workers_Empowerment_Act_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0609
Education – Public Libraries -Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Solomon

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0609 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

The rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively with employers ensures that both workers and management come to the table as equals. Workers have organized in many different industries and have been able to ensure that they have good working conditions, health care, and reasonable wages.

It does cost employers more. There is absolutely no argument about that. Employers will always say that they can't afford to have workers organize because it eats into their profits, and often they prevail. Our members would respectfully ask you to look at this from the side of the workers. Is it right for an employer to pay sub-standard wages, or provide poor working conditions so that THEY can make more profit, at the expense of their workers? Any business that cannot pay a decent wage and provide decent working conditions does not deserve to be in business.

Public libraries, like other businesses should not be operating by taking advantage of workers. They should be enthusiastic in their support for good working conditions and good wages, and should welcome organizing and collective bargaining.

This bill will allow for collective bargaining for public library workers. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

3.19.2024 MSEA House Bill X609 Testimony_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
House Bill 609
Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers
Empowerment Act)

Senate Finance Committee
March 20, 2024

Christian Gobel
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 609. House Bill 609 grants employees of public libraries the freedom to form, join, and participate in an employee organization and to engage in activities related to collective bargaining. MSEA supports all legislation that expands and enhances collective bargaining rights for public employees. MSEA stands in solidarity with all unions in the labor movement to build worker power and ensure that all workers have a voice in their workplace.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

House Bill 609 is common sense legislation to promote workers' rights for employees of public libraries. The bill enables employees to engage in protected concerted activities for their mutual aid and protection, prohibits employers and employee organizations from engaging in certain unfair labor practices, establishes election procedures for the certification of exclusive representatives, and requires good faith bargaining between employers and certified exclusive representatives concerning wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

MSEA strongly believes that communities, government, the public, and workers benefit through the practice and procedure of collective bargaining. Enabling workers to have a voice in their workplace and working conditions enhances the



delivery of public services, creates a more stable and healthier workforce, and allows labor and management to address potential disputes in a responsible and efficient manner for the benefit of all. For these reasons, MSEA will always stand in solidarity with workers who seek the right to join unions and engage in collective bargaining.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 609.

HB 609_AFSCME3_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Denise Gilmore

Position: FAV



190 W. Ostend St., #101
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-547-1515
Email: info@afscmemd.org

Patrick Moran – President

**HB 609 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining
(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**Finance Committee
March 20, 2024**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports HB 609. This legislation enables collective bargaining rights for public library workers across the state. HB 609 applies to all Maryland public library systems except Baltimore, Prince George’s, and Montgomery counties who have unionized already and have these rights codified into law. For the included counties, HB 609 will provide a modern, fair, and consistent process for public library workers to unionize and collectively bargain.

Libraries are the cornerstones of our community. They are so much more than just books – they provide technology, job search support, classes and resources for families, COVID test kits and masks, and so much more. Our libraries offer integral support to the public, and this is a crucial opportunity to support the library workers who make our libraries run. Library workers include librarians, shelvers, circulation assistants, cataloging assistants, technology and video coordinators, building care technicians, IT workers, library associates, and more. Library workers deserve to have collective bargaining rights, and a voice in their working conditions, pay, and benefits. Instead of a piecemeal approach that covers only some library workers in the state, this legislation will allow workers in public libraries across Maryland the opportunity to choose if they want to form a union without coming back to the legislature year after year.

AFSCME has organized tens of thousands of library workers across the country. In Maryland, AFSCME already represents workers at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the University System of Maryland, Baltimore City Community College, St. Mary’s College of Maryland, and Morgan State University. Library workers in both Howard County and Anne Arundel County are organizing their unions with AFSCME Council 3 as well.

HB 609 passed the house with bipartisan support. Please support our public library workers and provide a favorable report on HB 609.

HB 609_Solomon_FAV_Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV

JARED SOLOMON
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Oversight Committee
on Personnel

Capital Budget

House Chair, Joint Audit and
Evaluation Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 312
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130
Fax 301-858-3053 · 410-841-3053
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 609 – Library Workers Empowerment Act
March 20, 2024
Senate Finance Committee

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on HB 609 to strengthen the bargaining power of library workers across Maryland.

What the Bill Does and Who it Covers:

- Currently, most library workers across the state lack comprehensive collective bargaining rights. The only exceptions are Baltimore, Prince George's and Montgomery counties who have already organized their unions and codified these rights, so they are not included in this bill. Enoch Pratt Library workers in Baltimore City have also organized and formed a union already, but they did so via a voluntary agreement, so they are included in this bill to codify and align their rights with the other counties. All other library systems in the state are included in the bill.
- For the included systems in the bill, HB 609 creates a clean, consistent process for library workers to form, join, and participate in a union and collectively bargain.
- The library workers covered under this legislation include librarians, shelvers, circulation assistants, cataloging assistants, technology, and video coordinators, building care workers, technicians, IT workers, library associates, and more. These workers will have the ability in unrepresented counties to make a choice if they want collective bargaining and who they wish to have represent them.
- Supervisors, managers, and confidential employees are not included in this bill.

Why the Bill is Important Now:

- Library workers are organizing for collective bargaining rights because they want and deserve a voice in their working conditions, pay, and benefits. Although our public libraries are managed by Boards of Trustees, the bulk of their funding comes from

taxpayer funds and makes library employees part of the public sector. This bill would enable ALL public library employees to get the same collective bargaining rights that other public sector workers in Maryland already have like teachers, firefighters, police, state and county employees, and like the library workers at our public K-12 and higher education institutions have.

- Libraries are cornerstones in our communities, and they are so much more than just books. They provide technology, job search support, classes and resources for families, COVID test kits and masks, and so much more. HB 605 is an opportunity for us to support the library workers who make our libraries run.
- Most importantly – this legislation eliminates the need for a patchwork approach where the General Assembly has to consider bills to enable individual county to collectively bargain. This bill would create one standard format to enable – not require – those employees across the state who would like to bargain.

How Has the Bill Been Amended:

During consideration in the House, I worked closely as the bill sponsor and subcommittee chair with the Library Administrators and unions to reach compromise language. The bill has the following changes:

- On Page 3, and throughout the bill, the “Governing Body of the Library System” is changed to reflect the “Governing Body of the Applicable County where the library system resides.” This change clarifies which governing entity ultimately has authority over the budget, which is in all cases the governing body of the jurisdiction not the library board.
- We amended HB 609 to make arbitration over disciplinary actions a permissive subject of bargaining, rather than mandatory.
- Finally, we increased the number of days the Board of Trustees has to approve a negotiated contract from 5 days to 14 days.

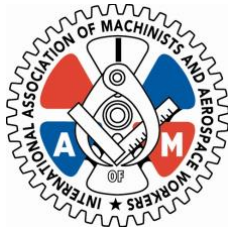
Many of the other changes that were proposed could not be accepted because they are already current law under the Public Employee Relations Act, which was signed into law in 2023.

This bill before you passed the House of Delegates 100-33. Thank you for your consideration and I ask for a favorable report on HB 609.

2024 03 19_HB 609 Ewan Testimony Support[36].pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Ewan

Position: FAV



HB 609 - SUPPORT

Laura Ewan

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

lewan@iamaw.org | (301) 967-4510

HB 609 - SUPPORT Maryland County Public Library Systems' Employee Collective Bargaining Rights

March 19, 2024

My name is Laura Ewan, and I am Associate General Counsel for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). I am honored to submit this testimony in support of HB 609, a crucial piece of legislation that will grant the employees of many of Maryland's County Public Library Systems the right to select a representative of their choosing to bargain on their behalf for their wages, hours, and working conditions.

In Maryland, each county library system exists as a creature of state statute. State law governing library structure and operations allows for boards of trustees or county governments to operate library systems and set wages, hours, and working conditions. However, the state laws do not automatically grant these entities the right to enter into binding collective bargaining agreements absent a grant of such authority from the legislature. That's what HB 609 would do—grant that authority to each County's library employing authority to enter into a collective bargaining agreement, should the library employees wish to be represented by a union.

For some historical perspective, Prince Georges County Library System and Montgomery County Library System sought this grant of authority in the 1980s and have long-established relationships with unions for their employees. Howard County Library System did the same in the early 2000s, although the employees there did not form a union until this year. Baltimore County's Library System's enabling legislation passed in 2021, and the workers are currently going through their third year of bargaining for their third contract. But having to do this on a county-by-county basis across Maryland is ineffective, inefficient, and ultimately asks for inconsistencies in how Library employees gain representation.

Instead, it just makes sense—for your busy schedules, and for these employees who want to have a union—to address the issue statewide all at once. HB 609 does just that.

This is a common-sense approach that guarantees access to the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association for these workers. HB 609 was drafted with consideration for county budgetary processes and county management structures in Maryland—*and* it was amended to address key concerns from Library system representatives in the House.

HB 609 is a comprehensive and fair bill for all involved.

It is also imperative that the law grant the right for a collective bargaining agreement to include a provision for arbitration of disciplinary actions beyond the Board of Trustees-overseen process already provided for by Maryland law. This allows workers to benefit from having a Union representative during such a harrowing and critical point in their career—defending themselves in light of disciplinary action—in a

way that the Board of Trustees-guided process does not. BCPL employees have gained from being able to negotiate this right into their contract.

Employees who work so hard to provide the numerous services that our libraries offer to the community want a voice in the conversations about the direction of the workplace. They want a seat at the table because they love their jobs. And they want meaningful representation to ensure that it stays that way. That is why we enthusiastically support this bill.

Ultimately, HB 609 strikes a balance between protecting workers' right to freedom of association with the library administration's obligation to manage the library system in a way most appropriate to their individual communities. If their election is successful, HB 609 provides the next steps for negotiating collective bargaining agreement to be ratified by the employees. In reading HB 609, you will note that management retains their right to exercise control and discretion over the library's operations, direct its employees and all that entails, determine the methods, means, personnel and resources, hire, promote, transfer, and so on. And HB 609 imposes deadlines to resolve negotiation issues at impasse in order for collective bargaining agreements to comply with county budgetary processes and timelines. A great deal of research and thought went into drafting HB 609 to ensure that the roles of each party are respected.

Maryland library employees need this bill passed just to have the opportunity to vote to see if they want to have a representative for collective bargaining purposes. Every single library employee we have spoken to sees this as an opportunity to make the job they love even better. These workers provide critical social and cultural services to Maryland residents, and all they ask is for the opportunity to have a collective voice at the table.

We ask you to vote in favor of HB 609 so library employees across Maryland can have the legal right and the freedom to choose whether they wish to be represented by a union or not for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Thank you.

Favorable Senate Testimony for HB609 2024 - Google

Uploaded by: Morgan Michael

Position: FAV

**Testimony of Morgan Michael
Library Associate II - Adult Services, Bel Air Branch
Harford County Public Library
Before the Senate Finance Committee
March 20, 2024
HB609 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining
(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Senator Beidle, Senator Klausmeier, and the esteemed members of the Finance Committee. My name is Morgan Michael, and I've been a Library Associate II in Harford County Public Library for almost seventeen years.

For three years we've worked with IAM to get a bill passed, enabling public library workers across the state to access their constitutional right to form a union.

While I am drained and heartbroken over the deterioration of my system, my passion for libraries and the service work we provide has not faded. The spirit of libraries resides in the workers - highly educated professionals who are often mistaken for volunteers. We need to be our own voice, to have the ability to advocate and fight for changes within the systems that are choosing to neglect us. We're underpaid and underappreciated, while the need for our service expands and increases throughout communities across the country.

Channels of communication to the administration and Board of Trustees in my system may appear open, but they are convoluted and often only a mirage. We're

left uninformed about changes, confused about policies that change on a whim, and overworked thanks to staffing shortages. Morale is at an all time low. Based on the number of public library workers ready to hold union elections, it's clear Harford's is not the only system with issues that need resolving.

I'm asking for the passage of HB 609, because without it, library workers across the state will continue to experience enormous disrespect from their employers.

The libraries of our future depend upon the workers in them right now. Without this bill, we are hopeless for change. Thank you for your time and your support..

240319_Finance_HB609_Education - Public Libraries

Uploaded by: Sarah Roth

Position: FAV



March 19, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier
Vice Chair, Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Vice Chair Klausmeier,

I would like to express my full support for *House Bill 609 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)*.

Unions are the backbone of the American workforce. Studies have shown that the unionization of a workforce directly leads to higher wages, decreased income inequality, smaller wage gaps, and a more diverse workforce. Additionally, the benefits that workers derive from their union membership lead to a healthier community as those benefits, like health insurance, are typically better quality and more accessible to employees whose workplace has an established union. Unions are able to fight for better conditions because of their power in numbers, and every worker in this country deserves the chance to bargain as a collective unit.

The Library Workers Empowerment Act will expand the right to collective bargaining to certain supervisory State employees who have not had this right in the past. Every union, whether they are made up of firefighters, State employees, or university employees, deserves the right to wield their collective weight when negotiating for better working conditions, and it is time for librarians and other library staff to enjoy these same rights.

I strongly urge this committee to give *House Bill 609 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)* the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone".

David Trone
Member of Congress

Anne Arundel County _FAV_HB609 (Senate).pdf

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV



March 20, 2024

House Bill 609

Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)

Senate Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 609 – Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act), which establishes a collective bargaining process for full- or part-time non-management employees of public library systems throughout the State.

Collective bargaining is a valuable tool for workers to come together as one voice and advocate for equity and inclusion. But this bill will not require any library workers to join a union - this bill just provides a path to unionization and leaves it up to library workers to certify representatives if the workers choose to unionize. Under current state law, there is no uniform guidance for library employees to organize for collective bargaining if they wish to do so. As a result, libraries have disjointed and complicated processes that vary widely by local jurisdictions. This bill addresses this issue by establishing a uniform and efficient process that will benefit both employees and employers.

Library workers are committed public servants who play an essential role in our community. Our libraries offer a safe and welcoming environment that provides residents with internet access, educational and cultural programs, and other essential services. In fact, library workers are often on the front lines of critical issues as the primary distributor of information and resources, such as during the COVID-19 crisis. Most recently, in Anne Arundel County, they played a critical part in our pilot gun violence mitigation effort by distributing more than 4,000 free gun locks. We are currently partnering with our library workers to distribute 7,000 Chromebooks to eligible residents through the state's Connected Devices program.

This bill sends a strong message and will empower library staff to address challenges and provide better service for all. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 609.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

IAM.letter.SupportHB609.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyrone Richardson

Position: FAV

**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687

Area Code 301-967-4500

March 19, 2024

Senator Pamela Beidle
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support – HB609 – Library Workers Empowerment Act

Dear Chairwoman Beidle:

On behalf of the 600,000 active and retired members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), **I strongly urge Senate passage of the Library Workers Empowerment Act (HB609), which recently passed the House of Delegates in a bipartisan 100-33 vote.**

This very important piece of legislation would give thousands of Maryland's unorganized public library workers a fair and consistent pathway to form a union and collectively bargain, if they wish. This bill does not guarantee library workers will form a union, but creates a law for these public workers to exercise their constitutional right of freedom of association.

The current Maryland state law does not provide all public library workers collective bargaining rights. In the past, this has been handled on a county-by-county basis, requiring the state legislature to repeatedly contemplate similar legislation. Public library workers should not be prohibited from pursuing collective bargaining rights simply because the work in a jurisdiction in which legislation has not passed.

The IAM, which is based in Upper Marlboro, MD, champions workers' rights, giving them a voice in the workplace and involvement in the decision-making process. We proudly represent the over 400 employees of the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) System.

The U.S. Constitution provides workers the right to form a union; passing the Library Workers Empowerment Act ensures a path for them to access that right.

Again – I urge Senate passage of the Library Workers Empowerment Act (HB609).

Sincerely,

Hasan Solomon
National Legislative Director

BaltimoreCounty_INFO_HB0609.pdf

Uploaded by: John Olszewski

Position: INFO



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **HB 609**

TITLE: **Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

SPONSOR: Delegate Solomon

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **Letter of Information**

DATE: February 13, 2024

Baltimore County offers this **Letter of Information** regarding House Bill 609 – Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act). This legislation would grant collective bargaining rights to libraries across the State of Maryland. Baltimore County supported House Bill 45 in 2021, which similarly allowed Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) employees to collectively bargain. BCPL employees have since elected a union as their exclusive bargaining representative.

HB 609 specifically excludes Baltimore County, as it has previously extended the right to organize to its library employees. BCPL employees are responsible for maintaining one of the County’s most valuable resources. Local libraries provide knowledge to young residents and access to digital resource for those who may not be able to afford their own. The experience of library employees uniquely positions them to contribute ideas for improving library operations across the State of Maryland. Allowing library employees to join a union will empower them to continue cultivating these critical shared spaces and thrive as employees.

For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.