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## **HB1175 Education – Public School Employers and Employees - Subcontracting for Services Ways and Means Committee February 26, 2024**

### **Favorable**

AFSCME Council 3 urges the committee to support HB 1175 which brings about responsible contracting to our public schools. As school employees for many years, we believe that the decision to contract our jobs, and how contracts are awarded and managed in our public school system should include safeguards, protections for public school employees, and notification to the public of such decisions are warranted.

We have seen too often school district systems across Maryland consider privatizing school employee jobs to cut costs. Over the years, our union has seen services sector jobs in the areas of transportation, food services, and maintenance jobs decline due to privatization. This controversial move has sparked debate among educators, parents, and community members about the potential consequences of such a decision.

When school districts consider outsourcing school employee jobs, we must ensure that strong labor protections like fair treatment, safe working conditions, and equitable pay for all employees are discussed. These protections help to prevent the exploitation and abuse of workers and promote a healthy and productive work environment. By implementing labor protections, such as fair wages, reasonable working hours, and access to benefits, public schools can ensure that their employees are treated with dignity and respect.

One primary reason why responsible contracting is important in public schools is to prevent corruption and fraud. Without proper oversight and transparency in the contracting process, there is a risk that vendors could exploit the system for personal gain, leading to wasted taxpayer dollars and subpar services for students. By implementing guidelines and monitoring procedures, public schools can mitigate these risks and ensure that contracts are awarded fairly and following proper regulations.

Supporting responsible contracting in public schools is creating a safe, inclusive, and sustainable environment for all stakeholders. By prioritizing fair labor practices, and transparency in the procurement process, schools can foster a positive school culture and ensure that resources are being used effectively. We thank Delegate Feldmark for introducing this long-overdue bill.

For these reasons, we urge the committee for a favorable report on HB1175.

