



Testimony - SB 231, State Government - Public Employee Relations Act - Alterations
Favorable
House Appropriations Committee
March 26, 2025
Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

SEIU Local 500, as one of Maryland's largest public sector unions representing over 23,000 workers, expresses our strong support for Senate Bill 231, which enhances the Public Employee Relations Act by improving labor relations and streamlining essential procedures for employee representation.

SB 231 makes several critical updates to labor relations in Maryland, including:

- **Modernizing Employee Representation:** The bill removes outdated restrictions on how exclusive representatives may meet with new employees, allowing the use of virtual technology to enhance accessibility and efficiency.
- **Strengthening the Public Employee Relations Board:** It streamlines deputy director appointments by allowing up to three positions without prescribing specific subject-matter areas, ensuring flexibility and diversity in administrative leadership.
- **Ensuring Legal Expertise in Labor Relations:** SB 231 mandates that deputy directors be attorneys, either licensed in Maryland at the time of appointment or within 12 months, improving the Board's ability to fairly and effectively adjudicate disputes.
- **Clarifying Election Procedures:** The bill establishes a minimum 10-day voting period for mail or electronic ballots in union representation elections, ensuring transparency and fairness.

- **Improving Unfair Labor Practice Investigations:** The legislation enhances procedures for addressing unfair labor practice complaints, ensuring that disputes are resolved in a timely and equitable manner.

These provisions will create a more effective and equitable labor relations framework, empowering Maryland's public workforce while maintaining procedural fairness for all stakeholders.

I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 231 and move it forward with a favorable report to ensure that Maryland continues to foster fair and efficient labor relations for its dedicated public employees.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500