

SB373

Good afternoon, Mr Chair and honorable committee members, I am here to speak in support of senate bill 373.

My name is Christian Rejonis and I am the president of the BWI Airport Professional Firefighters representing the brave Women and Men, Firefighters, paramedics, EMT's and Fire prevention professionals who show up 24/7, 365 to provide emergency services to the BWI Marshall Airport, its surrounding communities and the more than 27 million passengers that fly in and out per year. To put that in perspective we are talking about over 73 thousand passengers per day.

We can also be spotted providing mutual aid coverage to Anne Arundel county, Baltimore county and Howard county multiple times a shift.

Collective bargaining is intended to be a fair process for unions and management to negotiate wages, hours and conditions of employment.

In reality, when you're a firefighter at BWI, collective bargaining really amounts to collective begging. We are left submitting proposals and hoping management will not just “deny” or “reject” the proposal outright.

Fire and Police departments in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince Georges counties as well as the city of Baltimore, Hagerstown and Salisbury all have the right to binding arbitration.

The MTA and the union SLEOLA representing many of the state law enforcement officers also have binding arbitration rights.

This is widely recognized as being due to the fact emergency services professionals should not and can not strike. If fire department's strike, people die. It really is that simple.

Some people like to give binding arbitration a bad name and say it's just a tool unions to use as a money grab. For us, it's really not about money. In fact most of the time in negotiations when we have had strong disagreement with management, it is rarely over compensation. It's over things that could have a significant, direct impact on our lives.

In general we just want to be treated fairly. For those reasons I strongly urge a favorable report on SB373 and I would be happy to discuss this topic further or answer any questions you may have.

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