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**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee
HB 1503 - State Personnel – Paid Family and Medical Leave
March 27, 2025**

FAVORABLE

AFT-Maryland is the certified bargaining representative for three state employee bargaining units– the Maryland Professional Employees Council, AFT Healthcare Maryland, and the Maryland School for the Deaf.

On their behalf, we call on this committee to issue a favorable report to HB 1503. This bill will provide state employees with a benefit that will allow qualifying employees up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, to help care for a close family member, or to themselves recover from a serious, long-term illness.

The bill is modeled after the state's FAMILI leave plan, but is a better benefit for state employees as it will allow those workers to receive their full compensation while using this leave. This bill will also save the state significantly, as it will lift the requirement in the state's new Family Medical Leave plan that requires employers to make significant contributions into the state's FAMILI fund.

All three of our unions came to an agreement with the state on these provisions during the last round of collective bargaining negotiations, and this bill is the manifestation of those agreements into state code.

In the course of our discussions with the administration about the best ways to fill the thousands of vacant positions in state government, while simultaneously creating cost savings for the state, all parties landed on this solution– this would be a clear benefit to attract prospective employees to work for state government, and it would allow the state to avoid having to pay into the state's FAMILI plan for each of its workers.

For these reasons, we call on this committee to issue a favorable report to HB 1503. Thank you.

