



City Union of Baltimore

Local 800, AFT, AFL-CIO

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Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
By Antoinette Ryan-Johnson

President, City Union of Baltimore, AFT Local 800
SB 148

Income Tax– Subtraction Modification – Public Safety Employment Retirement Income
January 21, 2026
SUPPORT

Good morning, Chair Guzzone, Vice Rosapepe and members of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee. My name is Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, and I am the President of City Union of Baltimore, AFT local 800, the union that represents a number of city employees, including our dedicated 9-1-1 call center specialists. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to SB 148, the bill that would include the state's first responders who work in our state's different 9-1-1 call centers into the Hometown Heroes Act and allow them a bit of a tax break on their retirement incomes.

The 9-1-1 specialists who work in Baltimore City handle on a daily basis police, fire, and ambulance calls. It has for a while been difficult to recruit and retain the qualified specialists needed to provide our residents with these life-saving services, as it is quite typical for these employees to leave due through the emotional toll this highly stressful job can take. The state recognizes the work 9-1-1 specialists do by classifying those specialists as "first responders." Indeed that is precisely what a 9-1-1 specialist is, often the first person responding to life-threatening crises and are the first person a person experiencing serious situation reaches out to for help.

We as a state recognize that other Hometown Heroes who act as first responders to very dangerous situations deserve a break on their taxes when it is time for them to retire; we are asking that we give those first responders who answer that 9-1-1 call be treated the same way. Again, we call for a favorable report to SB 148. Thank you.

Antoinette M. Ryan-Johnson

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