

To the Senate Finance committee, Senator Beidle.pd

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Position: FAV



IAM Local 4538
P.O. Box 20250
Towson, MD 21284

To the Senate Finance committee, Chair Beidle. Thank you for allowing me to speak on SB253. My name is Anita Bass and I am the proud IAM Local President for 4538 which represents the Towson Apple Store and Baltimore County Public Library workers.

I am here in support of SB253 because it will enable the Baltimore County Public Library supervisory unit if they so choose to unionize. When the Library Workers Empowerment Act was passed in 2024 Baltimore County Public Library workers were not part of that bill because we already had our law and our union. Since the Library Workers Empowerment Act (LWEA) became law, BCPL library supervisory units are now requesting that they be included. The supervisory unit should have the same rights to unionize as non-supervisory staff. They still have concerns with working conditions and wages.

Recent events at BCPL have shown what happens when workers at all levels lack a seat at the table: abrupt staffing decisions, as BCPL 14 part-time librarians were fired and that caused a disruption to the communities our libraries serve. Collective bargaining rights provide structure, accountability, and stability. They do not interfere with the library system, they improve it.

Granting the BCPL supervisory unit eligibility to unionize simply brings our system in line with the rest of Maryland. It affirms that fairness, consistency, and respect for public workers matter. And it ensures that our public libraries remain strong, stable institutions for the communities that depend on them. SB253 does not make them a union. The BCPL Supervisory unit would like to be eligible to unionize.

I ask for a favorable report on SB253. Thank you.

Anita Bass
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BTU Testimony SB 253 2026.pdf

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**Senate Bill 253 – Baltimore County Public Library - Collective Bargaining - Supervisory
Employees
Finance Committee
January 29, 2026
FAVORABLE**

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents over 9,000 employees of Baltimore City Public Schools, including teachers, paraprofessionals, school secretaries, counselors, librarians, clinicians, transportation aides, and school support staff. Our members are on the frontlines of public education everyday, and strive to ensure a safe learning environment for the students we serve. Our work to educate, support and develop Baltimore City's young people, is grounded in the protections and rights we have from collective bargaining, and we recognize that all workers deserve the right to have a meaningful voice in their working conditions. As educators, our legacy of collective bargaining has long advocated for the learning conditions that students need in order to thrive, as our working conditions are our students' learning conditions. The Baltimore Teachers Union is writing in strong support of SB 253 and **we request that the committee issue a favorable report.**

At its core, this legislation affirms a simple and fundamental principle: all public workers deserve the right to unionize and collectively bargain over their working conditions, compensation, and the policies that shape their work. Public library supervisors play a critical role in ensuring that libraries remain safe, welcoming, and effective community spaces—supporting literacy, workforce development, access to technology, and lifelong learning. Yet without collective bargaining rights, these workers lack a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their ability to do their jobs well and sustain their careers in public service. This bill is about dignity, fairness, and democracy at work.

Collective bargaining is not only good for workers—it is good for the public. When workers have a voice, turnover decreases, morale improves, and institutions become more stable and responsive. In schools, we have seen how bargaining improves staffing levels, professional development, safety, and retention, all of which directly benefit students and families. The same is true in libraries. Empowered library supervisors are better positioned to advocate for adequate staffing, training, and resources, which translates into higher-quality services, stronger community engagement, and more equitable access to information and learning opportunities.

At a time when public institutions face growing demands and shrinking resources, we should be strengthening—not weakening—the voices of the workers who hold these systems together. Extending collective bargaining rights to public library supervisors is a necessary step toward a more just and effective public sector, where workers are respected as partners in delivering essential services.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Teachers Union urges a favorable report on this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB253_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SB 253 - Baltimore County Public Library - Collective Bargaining - Supervisory Employees

Senate Finance Committee

January 29, 2026

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 253. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

Collective bargaining is an exercise of freedom and democracy. Collective bargaining unites workers through their union to negotiate as equals with employers, determine wages, hours, leave, safety, and work-life balance. The Baltimore County Public Library System is one of the biggest library systems in the state, and its success relies on the people who run it every day. The work they do is essential—guiding staff, maintaining functional branches, and implementing statewide expectations. However, under current law, these workers are excluded from the collective bargaining rights that their colleagues exercise. SB 253 corrects that imbalance and brings them in line with the rest of the state.

SB 253 makes two key updates:

1. It establishes a dedicated bargaining unit for supervisory employees, one that allows supervisors to have a voice, but does not disrupt existing structures.
2. It updates the definitions of “management” and “nonmanagement,” drawing a clear line between who exercises independent judgment and who does not.

Collective bargaining strengthens the entire workforce as communication between management and staff improves, workplace issues are resolved collaboratively, and workers become more resilient. Our workforce functions best when the workers have a seat at the table. SB 253 recognizes this reality and ensures Baltimore County Public Library supervisors are offered the same workplace rights that workers across Maryland already exercise.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 253.



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SB 253 Testimony - FAVORABLE - Heather Faust.pdf

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Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to consider SB 253, Baltimore County Public Library – Collective Bargaining – Supervisory Employees. And thank you to Senator Hettleman for sponsoring this important legislation.

My name is Heather Faust, I live in Catonsville, MD, and I'm currently a Library Supervisor with Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL). However, when legislation was passed in 2021 initially permitting non-supervisory Baltimore County Public Library employees to unionize, I was still a non-supervisory employee. I was proud and excited to join the new BCPL union, and I even volunteered to serve as a steward at the branch where I have worked since 2017.

As I mentioned in my testimony last year, when the opportunity for promotion to my current position suddenly presented itself in the summer of 2022, the biggest drawback I felt, and something that almost caused me not to apply for the position, was that if I were to be promoted to Library Supervisor I would have to leave the union. I thought long and hard about this before deciding to apply, eventually concluding that, for me, management and unions are not mutually exclusive, and that being a manager who understands how unions work and recognizes their benefit could only be a good thing for all concerned.

I think that concept has been made abundantly clear during the past few months, as BCPL has experienced a tremendous amount of upheaval as a direct result of the actions of certain individuals formerly in BCPL administration. Perhaps not surprisingly, those same individuals were vocally opposed to both BCPL's original non-supervisory bargaining unit in 2021 **and** the mere possibility of a supervisory bargaining unit - even though SB 253 simply brings BCPL into line with other employers throughout the state, including other Maryland public library systems.

Those opposed to this bill have made repeated claims about how closely BCPL administration and the BCPL union have worked together to successfully negotiate four contracts. But regardless of how closely the two named parties worked together, the fact is that branch- and department-level managers and supervisors like me who are **not** "confidential employees,"¹ and who do **not** take part in setting library policy or budgets, are left out of the negotiation process – and the entire conversation - completely under the current system.

As a supervisor on the branch level, not only am I **not** part of the negotiation process, I cannot even talk to anyone **about** the process. I have no outlet to ask any questions about what's being negotiated, offer my support (or opposition) at any point in the process, or give any input about how any part of the negotiations might affect my staff or my branch, let alone my own workload or experience as a supervisor.

This is very isolating. And unfortunately, especially for those managers and supervisors who were not previously familiar with unions, the current structure that excludes us from the collective bargaining process seems to have created an unnecessary estrangement between managers and staff by drawing an artificial – but very visible – "us vs them" line between us, undermining trust while still leaving branch- and department-level managers and supervisors out in the cold.

At no time was this more evident than just two months ago when many BCPL managers and supervisors found out **after the fact** about a major – and completely unprecedented – personnel action that had already taken place against 14 valued BCPL staff members, despite the fact that active negotiations between BCPL administration and the BCPL union were ongoing at that time. Managers across the BCPL system were further shocked (but sadly not surprised) to find that those of their colleagues who did know about the planned action ahead of time had been explicitly threatened with the loss of their own jobs if they were to disclose that knowledge to anyone.

To make it very clear – managers and supervisors were purposely kept from communicating with each other and with their staff under threat of retaliation and had no recourse and no network of support. This is entirely unacceptable and is a powerful illustration of why the option to organize a supervisory bargaining unit is needed for BCPL managers and supervisors, especially as we are now in the process of undoing the damage that was done by these draconian, unilateral actions and rebuilding open communication and trust among all BCPL staff.

So far the assumption has seemed to be that as a supervisor my position must necessarily be aligned more with the institution and library administration than with the staff I supervise or even with my fellow supervisors. Yet managers and supervisors at BCPL have a great deal in common with the staff we supervise. We face many of the same challenges and concerns, we share many of the same goals, and we too deserve a process whereby we can advocate for improvements to our own working conditions as well as those of our staff, conditions which are really interrelated. We already act as a bridge between the staff we supervise and library administration, as we are expected to understand and communicate both library policies and procedures and the needs of branch and department staff in a two-way channel, which is why it's so important to include the voice of this group in the negotiation process as well.

SB 253 clearly spells out the roles and expectations of the two bargaining units (supervisory and non-supervisory), assisting in clearer communication and an improved working relationship between all parties. The legislation has been carefully crafted to remove the possibility of conflict of interest, in keeping with other supervisory collective bargaining units already in existence throughout the state.

Any budgetary impact would presumably be primarily the result of an agreement negotiated and agreed upon by all parties. BCPL already makes periodic adjustments to its salary scale to ensure that as an employer BCPL is competitive and that BCPL staff at all levels are fairly compensated for their work. Collective bargaining for branch- and department-level managers and supervisors would not change this fact, only the process by which it occurs.

SB 253 does **not** automatically establish a supervisory bargaining unit at BCPL. What it **does** do is bring BCPL's collective bargaining structure in line with the 2024 Library Workers Empowerment Act, and indeed with all the other library systems in Maryland, while retaining all the processes of the 2021 BCPL law.

I hope you will support SB 253 and encourage your colleagues to do likewise, and I thank you again for your time and consideration.

ADDENDUM:

As I shared in my testimony last year, other managers and supervisors both in Baltimore County and throughout the state of Maryland already have similar collective bargaining rights. I included a few supporting links below that I found in only a very quick and cursory search online. For example:

- In 2024 Governor Moore signed not only HB 609/SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act (LWEA), which included collective bargaining rights for supervisory employees of all other Maryland public library systems currently without a union, but also HB 260/SB 192, which allowed over 5,000 supervisors working for the state of Maryland to collectively bargain.² Those state supervisors now have their own supervisory unit within the Maryland Classified Employees Association (MCEA)³
- Since 1994 Baltimore County Public Schools have had the Council of Administrative & Supervisory Employees (CASE) as their designated bargaining unit for those supervisory personnel whose job requires them to be state certified.⁴
- In addition, the BCPS Organization of Professional Employees (BCPSOPE) represents professional, technical, and supervisory positions that do not require state certification.⁵
- Both the Baltimore City and Baltimore County Police Departments include employees up through the rank of Lieutenant in their collective bargaining units.⁶
- Prince George's County Library has had both non-supervisory and supervisory units in their union for many years.

¹ <https://koffassociates.com/news-and-notes/confidential-employee-designation/>

² <https://afscmemd.org/press-room/gov-moore-signs-bill-giving-5000-state-supervisors-ability>

³ <https://mcea-su.md.aft.org/>

⁴ <https://case-bcps.org/>

⁵ <https://bcpsope.org/>

⁶ <https://fop3.org/>

SB253_BaltimoreCountyDelegation_FAV

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
BALTIMORE COUNTY DELEGATION

February 9, 2026

Chair Pam Beidle
Finance Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Subject: SB253 – Baltimore County Public Library - Collective Bargaining -
Supervisory Employees**

Dear Chair Beidle,

This is to inform you and the Finance Committee that Senate Bill received a **FAVORABLE** vote from the Baltimore County Senate Delegation on February 9th.

The Baltimore County Senate Delegation respectfully requests that the Finance Committee consider its favorable recommendation when voting on this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Shelly Hettleman".

Shelly Hettleman
Chair, Baltimore County Delegation

SB253_FAV_Hettleman.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
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Chair, Rules Committee
Budget and Taxation Committee

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Capital Budget
Health and Human Services
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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

**SB 253 Baltimore County Public Library – Collective Bargaining –
Supervisory Employees.**

Maryland has recognized the importance of collective bargaining by granting non-supervisory employees of the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) the right to organize and negotiate fair working conditions. Prior legislation ensured that library staff had a voice in shaping their workplace policies, leading to greater job stability and improved services for the community. In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 45, authorizing non-supervisory staff of the BCPL to form a union and collectively bargain, should they choose to do so. Later that year, the staff successfully formed a union and negotiated collective bargaining agreements.

In 2024, the Library Workers Empowerment Act (LWEA), was enacted. This legislation extended collective bargaining rights across the state of Maryland. However, it excluded BCPL as it already had established a collective bargaining framework. Notably, LWEA allows for two bargaining units for those included in the legislation – one for employees, and one for supervisory employees. Because it is excluded from the LWEA legislation in 2024, BCPL supervisory employees lack the same rights afforded to their counterparts across the state. SB 914 seeks to extend these rights to BCPL supervisory employees, acknowledging their critical role in library operations and the need for equitable representation.

The absence of collective bargaining rights for the supervisory employees of BCPL poses several concerns. First, when unionized non-supervisor employees are promoted to supervisory roles, they face the option of forfeiting their union status or denying the promotion offer in order to retain their representation. Additionally, with the absence of these rights, supervisors may be subject to limited workplace resources, stagnant wages, and benefit disparities.

It is important to recognize that there are plenty of examples in Maryland where separate bargaining units of supervisory and non-supervisory employees share the same union affiliation. For example, Maryland State Education Association, MSEA, has local affiliates throughout the state that represent supervisory and nonsupervisory employees within the same school district in Allegany County, Carroll County, Dorchester County, Frederick County, Garrett County, and St. Mary's County. This clearly demonstrates that separate bargaining units can exist successfully under the same union while maintaining clear distinctions to prevent conflicts of interest. The separation by unit enables supervisors to advocate for their interests in their own collective bargaining unit.

SB 253 promotes equitable treatment by granting supervisory employees the same rights to collective bargaining as other staff members, ensuring all voices are heard in organizational decisions. It allows for unionized employees to retain their union status should they be promoted from a non-supervisory to a supervisory role. The bill also includes provisions to delineate management and supervisory roles clearly, ensuring that those with hiring or firing authority remain classified to prevent conflicts.

It is paramount that Maryland takes the necessary steps to ensure that all employees have essential rights in the workplace. We must make certain that supervisors, like their non-supervisory counterparts, are empowered in the workplace to advocate for themselves and remain committed to leadership and organizational performance. In order to do so, we must extend the collective bargaining rights that are available across Maryland to BCPL supervisors. SB 253 will do just that. Therefore, I urge a favorable report from the committee.