



## **TESTIMONY FOR HB0604**

### **Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2026**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Solomon

**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0504 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively with employers ensures that both workers and management come to the table as equals. However, under current law, when the Governor and state workers reach an impasse in bargaining, the Governor can simply choose to ignore the process and appropriate funds for workers based on previous levels. HB0604 corrects this inequity.

Workers have organized in many different industries and have been able to ensure that they have good working conditions, health care, and reasonable wages. Arbitration would give our state workers the same rights. Sure, it might cost the state more, but is it right for us to pay wages that fall short of private industry or provide poor working conditions?

Binding arbitration not only has the potential of improving the lives of our state workers. With better terms of employment and the ability to participate in arbitration in the future, we may be able to fill the 4,000 vacancies that exist across the state government.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee