

# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

## AFFILIATED WITH:

Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building Trades Council - AFL-CIO  
Baltimore Port Council  
Baltimore Metro Council - AFL-CIO  
Central MD Labor Council - AFL-CIO  
Del-Mar-Va Labor Council - AFL-CIO  
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Written Testimony of  
Rico Albacarys, Assistant Business Agent, IBEW LOCAL 24  
Before the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee On  
HB 604 Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2026

## Favorable

March 4, 2026

Madam Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rico Albacarys, and I am a member and employee of IBEW Local 24. I am writing in support of HB 604, the Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2026. Maryland state and higher education employees cannot strike, yet the current collective bargaining process gives them no real recourse when negotiations break down. Factfinding, the only tool available to resolve an impasse, is non-binding and allows management to simply impose what it wants. That is not a fair process.

HB 604 addresses this by establishing clear negotiating timelines and, when parties remain at impasse, providing access to binding interest arbitration. A neutral arbitrator would hear both sides and issue a final written award. Most states already use binding arbitration for public employees, and right here in Maryland, MTA workers and many local government employees have access to it. Anne Arundel County passed binding arbitration by a unanimous 7-0 vote just this past October.

It is time Maryland extended this basic protection to state and higher education workers. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 604. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rico Albacarys  
Assistant Business Agent  
IBEW Local 24