



The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
The Honorable Ken Kerr, Vice Chair
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director, Baltimore DC Metro Building Trades Council on
HB 0604: Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2026
Position: FAVORABLE**

Thank you, Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 864. I am Ray Baker, Maryland Director of the Baltimore-DC Building Trades (BDCBT). The BDCBT's 28 affiliates represent more than 30,000 union construction workers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The BDCBT supports HB 604 which amends the collective bargaining negotiations process to promote good faith negotiations between the state and higher education employee unions and management. This legislation is important because clarity and resolutions are necessary and vital and this legislation resolves a potential impasse through the use of binding interest arbitration.

This would not be unprecedented in the state as most states in the country utilize binding arbitration for some or all their public employees. For Maryland to assume its position as a leader in the country, it cannot continue to lag behind other states in the way we treat state higher education public employees. In October, the jurisdiction housing the state capitol, Anne Arundel County unanimously passed binding arbitration. This should provide the model for the state to follow. Now is the time for Maryland to afford this right to state and higher education employees.

The BDCBT urges a favorable report on HB 604.

Ray Baker
Maryland Director, BDCBT
RBaker@BDCBT.org
410.585.7862