



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 443 - Southern Maryland Code Counties - Collective Bargaining
House Appropriations Committee
February 4, 2020

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards
President
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Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 443 - Southern Maryland Code Counties - Collective Bargaining. My name is Donna S. Edwards and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Expanding collective bargaining rights to Charles County employees is an idea that is far past due. The United States has long lagged behind other industrialized nations in collective bargaining coverage for public and private-sector workers. However, the right to collectively bargain is essential so that working men and women have the strength to improve their living standards, provide for their families and build a strong middle class. Every year, some 30,000 collective bargaining agreements are negotiated. In 2019, 7.1 million employees in the public sector and 7.5 million workers in the private sector belonged to a union¹.

Simply put, there is no greater tool for workers to join the middle class and to provide for their families than collective bargaining. This is a right that we fight daily to protect and expand, and we believe it is high time that employees of local governments in Maryland enjoy the same protections and benefits that millions of American workers currently enjoy.

Collective bargaining does not just benefit the workers. In order for local government to recruit and retain talented employees, an incentive must be created to make local government employment more desirable. Finding quality employees is good for local government, the employee, and the taxpayer. With a collective bargaining agreement, stability in the workplace is maintained, and productivity increases.

HB 443 is good for workers, good for local governments, and good for taxpayers. We urge a favorable report.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>