



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100 • Baltimore, MD 21215-3226
410/764-3030 • fax: 410/764-3008
md.aft.org

Marietta English
PRESIDENT

Kenya Campbell
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland State Senate
Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Testimony of Linda Day, President, Maryland Classified Employees Association
AFT Local 1935
February 20, 2020
SB 884 – State Prescription Drug Benefits – Retiree Benefits - Revisions**

SUPPORT

As a retired employee of the state of Maryland, who for nearly 30 years worked for the Department of Social Services I offer my full throated support for SB 884. I am not only a concerned state retiree, I am also the president of the Maryland Classified Employees Association, a union whose membership includes roughly 2,000 retired state workers. On behalf of our members both currently employed by the state, and members who have retired from service for the state MCEA asks for a favorable report to SB 884, the bill that would offer state workers clarity as to who will be eligible for the new state employee retiree prescription drug benefit.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, when the state last year passed a law creating a new benefit program for current and prospective retirees, it did so after hearing from thousands of retirees how the decision years ago to move all retiree prescription drugs benefits to Medicare Part D was a disservice to those who had given their professional careers to the well-being of Maryland. Hearing that for many state retirees, the medications that are needed to keep them alive, or that might be used in cases of unforeseen catastrophes would put many of their retirees into bankruptcy, the state took steps to correct this problem. Yes, in the event the state does win its current court case against a retiree, a supplemental state plan for current or prospective retirees may help us fend off economic ruin. But the bill passed did more to confuse, not clarify who was eligible for this plan, when retirees needed to be enrolled, et cetera. This bill before you this morning takes steps to clarify these questions.

Because this bill spells out that this program will be implemented on the second open-enrollment period following the resolution of the Fitch v. State of Maryland court case, if the state prevails, DBM will have much more time to plan and clarify the eligibility requirements for this benefit, as well as ample opportunity to inform retirees of the steps they need to take in order to be enrolled. In addition, state employees thinking about retirement will have more time to consider their expected costs once they have left their position in service for the state. It is for these reasons, MCEA calls for a favorable report to SB 884.

