

The Baltimore Teachers Union



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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 163 Right to Work February 4th, 2020

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Diamonté Brown, President of the Baltimore Teachers Union

Chair Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee. On behalf of the 7,000 members of the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), we strongly oppose HB 163, the so called “Right to Work” legislation.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2017 in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees*, that states and public sector unions may no longer collect agency fees from nonconsenting employees, this bill is redundant and a tool for management to intimidate workers from acting collectively.

“Right to Work” laws have been implemented in many states, studied across the country for years, and the results paint a grim picture. Union and nonunion workers alike in these states earn [lower wages](#) than in states who did not implement these laws, and the legislation [did not result](#) in job growth. Furthermore, legislation like HB 163 seeks to discourage folks from acting collectively to better their working conditions, which is bad for democracy and citizenship as a whole. Unionized workers are [more likely to vote, be politically active](#), and contribute to charity. Unions are among the very few groups in the state and country who [represent middle and working class interests](#) in government. Union members are also parents, and decades of research has demonstrated that children with parents who have job security, better health care, and superior wages perform better in school, so this is also an educational justice issue.

Finally, by discouraging participation in unions, larger groups of nonunion workers will receive the benefits of collectively bargained wages, benefits, protections, and free representation without putting forward the money that made negotiating for these improvements possible. By allowing a growing number of workers a free ride, the resources available for collective bargaining would decrease, and therefore the overall power of the union to support and protect its workers (both contributors and free riders alike).

For these reasons, **BTU strongly urges the committee to issue an unfavorable report for HB163.**