

**Written Testimony submitted to
The Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
HB 1321 – Right to Work
March 5, 2021**

OPPOSE

Chair Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee. On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 educators, government, and healthcare workers across Maryland, I urge you to oppose HB 1321 – the so called “Right to Work” bill, that is nothing less than an attack on America’s middle class.

The goal of this bill is to weaken the collective bargaining rights of Maryland’s workers. By doing so, it will work to eliminate the strong middle class in our state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), workers in right to work states earn an average of \$6,000 less per year and are also less likely to be offered health insurance and retirement security.

Evidence shows, public health is better overall in states without right to work laws. The United Health Foundation (UHF), which publishes America’s Health Rankings, reports that in 2016, eight of the top ten healthiest states were free from this law, while nine of the ten unhealthiest states were right to work.

Furthermore, the BLS reports the rate of fatalities in the workplace is 54 percent higher in right to work states.

An important issue to Maryland, as we work to reform the education system in our state – funding for public schools is \$3,300 less per student in right to work states. This drives away good teachers and staff, making right to work states most of the lowest performing in the nation.

The right to work law is not just - right to work for less money and benefits, it also means less safety, less health care and less money for education in our state.

I urge you to oppose HB 1321.

Marietta English
President