



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 138 – EDUCATION BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING

This bill allows employees of Baltimore County Public Library system to organize and establish a collective bargaining process. The Baltimore County Public Library plays a vital role in the community with 19 branches, over 5 million visitors annually, and provides computer access to nearly 1.1 million people. While performing this crucial role, Baltimore County Library employees need a work environment that ensures their voices are heard in making decisions. This bill would give the opportunity for labor professionals to represent their interests and open the door to better communication, greater transparency, and a more equitable workplace.

Two other library systems in the state, Montgomery and Prince George's County already have the power of collective bargaining through their union, and in 2013, legislation was passed for the Howard County library to do the same.

This bill is supported through favorable testimony from the Baltimore County Administration. The library's new director and the board of trustees also support this bill with amendments.

Throughout this pandemic, much our community has relied on the Baltimore County Public Library to stay connected and that have responded with in full – with services to ensure children without access to broadband could still learn, and with creative programming that connects and educates the public.

Forty six percent of their employees are part time and do not receive access to a pension program- which is strictly based on employee contributions, nor are they eligible for dental or health care coverage through the library system. Collective bargaining would give these front line workers the opportunity to organize and relay their concerns.

While our library continues to be a driving force in providing educational, cultural and enrichment activities to the citizens of Baltimore County, it is time to give its employees a voice on issues that matter most to them and that is why I ask for a favorable report of SB 138.