

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee
HB 673 – State Health Care Facilities - Employees - Alternative Workweeks
February 16, 2021**

SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass and members of the committee: On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 state, county and municipal government workers across Maryland, we urge you to support HB 673.

AFT Healthcare, an affiliate of AFT-Maryland, represents state healthcare workers including registered nurses and physicians, therapists and counselors, and other professional classifications.

AFT Healthcare and the state of Maryland came to an agreement in 2019 on alternative workweeks of 36-hours to be offered to registered nurses working in Maryland Department of Health facilities. This would allow a nurse to work three 12-hour shifts for a total of 36 hours a week and be considered a full-time employee. Maryland state employee nurses have been working these 12-hour shifts in state facilities for years.

However, there is a requirement that all state employees must work 40 hours a week to be considered full time. Therefore, nurses in state facilities would have to work three twelve hour shifts per week and take 4 hours of earned leave to make the 40 hours necessary to remain full time. Or they would be required to work an additional 4-hour shift.

This bill will allow employees working a 36-hour work week to keep their full-time status and benefits. The state wants the 12-hour shifts to allow continuity of care during 8-hour shift changes. It will help in the recruitment of RNs during the current shortage of staff. And will provide additional shift options for nurses who need time for family or continue their education.

AFT Healthcare and the Maryland Department of Health have negotiated an amendment to the bill to address the issue of overtime compensation. We urge a favorable report on HB 673 with an amendment.

Marietta English
President