



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 742 – State Retirement and Pension System –
COVID-19-Related Death Benefits - Extension
House Appropriations Committee
February 17, 2022**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 742 – State Retirement and Pension System – COVID-19-Related Death Benefits - Extension. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

We wish that this bill was unnecessary, and that we were on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. Every last Marylander has been affected by this virus, and our state workforce is no exception. They have worked throughout the pandemic, without a break in services, and they and their families have suffered the effects of the disease. Those left behind need assurances that their sacrifice will not be ignored, and that the state death benefits of their loved ones will be available to them.

HB 742 would extend the date – from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023 – that is used to determine eligibility of members of the State Retirement and Pension System for “line-of-duty” death benefits when COVID-19 caused or contributed to the death of a member. It is unfortunate that we need to extend this date, as it is a very real reminder that this health crisis is not behind us. However, it is absolutely necessary to provide comfort to the families that suffer these losses.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 742.