



Written Testimony of

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International President of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

RE: Support of HB1225

Submitted to the Maryland House Appropriations Committee on March 4, 2022

Thank you Chair Maggie McIntosh, Vice Chair Mark S. Chang and members of the House Appropriations Committee for providing me the opportunity to weigh in on this very important piece of legislation before your committee. **I am writing on behalf of the more than 600,000 active and retired members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), in strong support of HB1225, which would allow Harford County Public Library staff the right to collective bargaining.**

We can all agree that libraries and their staff are so vital to our communities. Libraries are often the cornerstone of many valuable resources that help neighborhoods thrive – from books to digital media and even host of cultural events for the learning community. That’s why library staff are so highly regarded by their community members. They ensure everyone - from kids to adults – have access to the tools needed to succeed today and in the future.

Unfortunately, some Harford County Public Library employees are facing challenging issues such as lacking respect and other poor working conditions. Simply put, the library staff want a voice in the workplace. Allowing these hard-working men and women the right to collective bargaining for workplace improvements assures they can stay focused on the care and resources their communities need.

Since libraries in Maryland are created by state law, state legislation had to be drafted and passed for the staff at the libraries in each individual county to be able to form a union with the ability to negotiate a labor contract. As of today, legislation has been passed for only a handful of counties to offer such rights for its library staff.

Today, we call on support of HB1225, which would allow Harford County Public Library staff to have the right to collective bargaining. The IAM would also support legislation that would extend such a right to county library staff throughout the entire state.

Again, we owe a lot to these hard-working men and women. Librarians and other library staff have often been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic as they've helped keep branches open, and even shifted resources online to often continue to meet the demands of the public.

The IAM has been working side-by-side with elected officials to make sure this basic human right of collective bargaining is afforded to all working people in Maryland. The IAM represents tens of thousands of workers in the state, including thousands of them living and working in Harford County alone. We've helped workers in the state receive labor contracts that allow them respect in the workplace, and fair wages and benefits that help them and their families.

Most recently, a group of nearly 460 Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) full and part-time employees across the county's 19 branches voted in favor of joining the IAM and is currently in negotiations with BCPL management.

A ratified labor contract would give these workers the opportunity to be part of the library system's decision-making process and help make sure it thrives for years to come.

Library employees are passionate about their work. They love the task of helping their community members. These working-class heroes want the basic right to collective bargaining.

For all these reasons, I strongly support HB1225 and hope you vote in favor of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Robert Martinez Jr.
IAM International President