

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Shomari Taylor, member, Maryland Defenders Union, AFSCME Local 423**  
**HB 90 - State Personnel Management System - Office of the Public Defender – Placement and**  
**Collective Bargaining**  
**Sponsor: Del. Shaneka Henson**  
**Appropriations Committee, Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

## **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Shomari Taylor and I am attorney in the felony division in Baltimore City. I am writing to you in support of HB90.

I have been a public defender for nearly nine years. I have been a felony attorney for three and a half of those nine years. This bill is extremely important to me because I believe that it will benefit some of Maryland's most marginalized individuals as well as the workers who advocate tirelessly on their behalf to provide effective legal representation.

Over the last two years, especially during the pandemic, I have witnessed an explosion in caseloads. Not only have caseloads increased, but with the proliferation of evidence such as body worn camera footage, surveillance video, cell phone data, social media data, and other forms of electronically stored information, the amount of preparation required for each case has also increased significantly. I have also seen some of my most talented colleagues leave this line of work because these conditions are not sustainable.

I hate having to tell a client who is incarcerated at an institution where COVID-19 is rampant that I simply won't be able to schedule their trial within six months because I have too many cases. Justice delayed is justice denied. It is absolutely essential that the workers of the Office of the Public Defender have the ability to advocate on their own behalf for manageable caseloads and for competitive pay so that we can retain our workers and better serve Maryland citizens.

I hope that you and the other members of the committee will stand with the workers of the Office of the Public Defender and vote yes on HB90. Thank you for your time.

Shomari Taylor  
Assistant Public Defender III  
Baltimore City