

## HB 54

David Turner

Favorable

Good afternoon. My name is David Turner, and I have been a full-time employee of St. Mary's College of Maryland's Office of Public Safety since 2010. In that time, I have worked as both a Dispatcher and patrol Officer, and have seen my salary, and that of my coworkers, fall farther and farther behind those of persons doing the same type of job, with the same inherent risks and difficulties, in other State of Maryland departments. This is partially a result of the College's existing funding formula, which only grants our employees 50% of state employee COLA salary increases. The cost of this became increasingly apparent once I became more involved with our union local and observed firsthand how the College's fiscal autonomy from the mainline state higher education budget process allowed them to restrict employee base salaries and raises cross campus significantly, and without oversight.

Additionally, due to our location, our staff compete for housing and other essentials with highly paid employees of and contractors associated with the Patuxent River Naval Air Station and its subsidiaries, and we are not able to do so on anything like an equal footing. Receiving fair COLA increases, without reduction by the College's current funding formula, would go a long way towards enabling our staff to live more comfortably, improve employee retention and morale across campus, and assist in the attraction and recruitment of qualified, motivated employees.

I wholeheartedly support the adoption of the funding formula alterations proposed in HB 54, and hope that all members consider the positive impacts for all employees of the college and the surrounding community that fair and equitable cost of living adjustments would provide.