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Harford County Public Library

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March 14, 2022

Email Distribution
House Appropriations Committee

RE: HB1225 and HB1225 Amendment - Delegate Steve Johnson -
Sponsor of the Proposed Legislation

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Committee Members:

On behalf of the board and administration of Harford County Public Library, we express deep regret that we were not present at the initial hearing in your committee which considered Del. Johnson's draft legislation, HB1225. If given the opportunity, we would have presented a different and more accurate picture of the circumstances of a highly praised and well administered public library system and the light in which we view this unjustified effort to launch an organizing campaign among our staff. It had been our posture to await presentation of Del. Johnson's draft legislation before his delegation prior to corresponding with the oversight committee. Because Del. Johnson did not afford us the opportunity to present our views of the proposed legislation before the delegation, we lost the opportunity that we awaited (although we did communicate with the Del. Johnson and the delegation in writing).

What we wish now is at least in writing to assure that you and the committee receive our unvarnished position that the proposed legislation is favored only by an extremely small minority of our staff, and of course by the parochial motivations of the labor organization involved. We understand that an amendment has been offered to make the draft legislation effective state-wide instead of only Harford County specific. We believe, however, that the thrust of the proposed legislation is still to drive the campaign in Harford County, and that the amendment intends only to dilute the impression that an act of state-wide legislation is being advocated on behalf of an inordinately small number of people without any regard to or consultation with the much larger number of constituents who may be negatively impacted by it.

On behalf of Harford County Public Library, we respectfully request that HB 1225 and the corresponding HB 1225 amendment as submitted by Delegate Johnson not be approved. This legislation was developed without consultation with the Harford County Public Library and submitted prior to affording us the opportunity to analyze in detail. Accordingly, no one should be surprised that

we believe as drafted, the legislation is flawed, would be harmful to our staff and the community that we serve, and fails to represent any substantial community of interest or favorable opinion in Harford Country.

After HB1225 was submitted to the Appropriations Committee, Delegate Johnson noted that HB 1225 intends to provide a pathway for Harford County Public Library employees to seek collective bargaining. Currently, there is no law to prevent any public library employee in the state of Maryland from seeking, or conversely refusing to seek representation from a union. Of additional procedural significance here, Delegate Johnson did not bring HB 1225 to the full local delegation for its analysis or consideration.

HB1225 is drafted by a third-party outsider with no specific relationship to Harford County or the Library staff, and with obvious well interested motivations. We were completely unaware that an amendment was being proposed by Delegate Johnson to make this proposed legislation effective statewide for public libraries and rescinding the current Legislation for Collective Bargaining for Howard County Libraries that was passed by the General Assembly in 2013. There have been no meaningful opportunities for public libraries to analyze and intelligently comment on the proposed legislation and places the beloved library systems in an untenable situation.

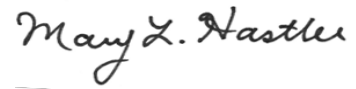
Before continuing and running the risk of victimizing Library employees and Harford County Public Library patrons, we would do well to review the Howard County Public Library collective bargaining legislation passed in 2013. Please take a moment to compare the two versions of legislation, and you will see that there is a significant substantive difference in the two versions. Both enable collective bargaining for library employees, but HB1225 and the HB1225 amendment go well beyond and seeks to impermissibly intrude in Library management prerogatives and necessary managerial discretion to the harm of all parties. In addition, current Maryland Public Library laws are at risk that have provided the framework and guidance for the long term sustaining of the wonderful libraries our constituents enjoy.

We are respectfully requesting that the House Appropriations Committee not support or approve HB1225 or the HB1225 Amendment as submitted by Delegate Steve Johnson. Thank you very much for the opportunity to express our deep concerns and all that you do for our Maryland Public Libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Allen".

Dr. William Allen, Chair
Harford County Public Library
Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Hastler".

Mary L. Hastler, CEO