



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100 • Baltimore, MD 21215-3226
410/764-3030 • fax: 410/764-3008
md.aft.org

Marietta English
PRESIDENT

Kenya Campbell
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Environment & Transportation Committee
HB 727 - Natural Resources - Maryland Park Service and State Parks - Alterations
(Great Maryland Outdoors Act)
February 23, 2022**

SUPPORT

Chair Barve and members of the committee, on behalf of the more than 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), including the Maryland Professional Employees Council (MPEC), which represents the Park Ranger Associates, we ask for a favorable report on HB 727 - Natural Resources - Maryland Park Service and State Parks - Alterations (Great Maryland Outdoors Act).

Park Rangers are and should be recognized as first responders. They are trained for and provide the same types of emergency services as EMTs, police, and fire fighters. Many times, Park Rangers have saved lives due to their level of training and professionalism.

Recognition of their service and training could help fill the large number of vacant positions currently in our state parks. Last year, the Maryland State Park Investment Commission recognized the need for highly qualified personnel to effectively operate the park and visitor services. With current staffing levels, one Park Ranger out on sick leave could mean there are no trained personnel available to operate the park.

Park Rangers are passionate about their work. They keep the parks safe and clean for recreation; promote better mental and physical health; and bring family and friends together in our great outdoors. Park Rangers are stewards of our state's most precious public lands and should be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Again, AFT-Maryland calls for a favorable report for HB 727. Thank you.

Kenya Campbell
President