

RE: SB 255- State Personnel Management System - Office of the Public Defender –
Placement and Collective Bargaining

Sponsored by: Senator Pamela Beidle

Bill Hearing: Senate Finance Committee
Thursday February 10, 2022

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Carolyn Schorr and I have been working at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender since last spring. I left the private law world to be a public defender because I firmly believe in our organization's mission. I grew up in Baltimore and I live a block away from my parents. I was raised to give back to our city and our community. Being a public defender is one of the best ways I can do that.

As a public defender, I am on the front lines of our judicial system. I have had to push aside health concerns in the middle of a pandemic to visit clients in prisons across the state, facilities who have utterly failed in protecting my clients from the spread of COVID-19. In the face of court closures, our workload continues to grow and our clients suffer from massive backlogs. Courts ignore our concerns and our clients' rights on a regular basis.

One step to address these issues is to allow our employees the right to collective bargaining. We know better than anyone what obstacles we face. The past two years have shown that we do not have the luxury of remaining at home while our clients suffer behind bars. However, without our voices being actively heard as part of the future of our organization, how can we expect OPD to have the proper tools to ensure a successful future for our clients?

My future is OPD and my future is Baltimore City. Please vote YES on SB 255 to ensure that remains a possibility for me and my family. Thank you for your consideration.

Carolyn Schorr
Assistant Public Defender
Baltimore City
Senate District 46
AFSCME Local 423