



Maryland Defenders Union
Local 423, AFSCME Council 3
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February 8, 2022

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 Isabel Lipman. I am an assistant public defender in Baltimore City, in the Felony Trial Unit. I have worked for the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) for fifteen years. My colleagues and I strive to provide outstanding representation to my clients, who are exposed to lengthy prison sentences, and often life in prison. However, we are constantly undermined by under-resourced and understaffed offices, a lack of leadership on systemic issues important to our clients, and a toxic agency culture.

Our clients deserve to have lawyers, core staff, and social workers on their team who can speak up about issues like these without fear of retribution. They deserve to have the support of core staff who earn a living wage. They deserve to have attorneys who have manageable caseloads and the resources they need to prepare an excellent defense.

Employees of the OPD deserve the civil right to collectively bargain – a right enjoyed by 30,000 of our fellow State workers. It would give all of us who defend the indigent the voice, the tools, and the security we need to provide the fierce and effective representation our clients deserve, and that the United States Constitution demands.

I urge the committee to support SB255 favorable with amendment.

Isabel Lipman
Assistant Public Defender
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