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Patrick Moran - President

HB 982 - State Employees – Programs and Scholarships for Human Services Careers and Probation Agents and State Contributions to Supplemental Retirement Plans

POSITION: FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports HB 982. This legislation addresses recruitment challenges in state government by providing for a collaboration between local school systems in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Prince George’s County to develop a feeder program into certain classifications in the Department of Human Resources. It also adds Parole and Probation Officers to a Loan Assistance Repayment Program. Finally, HB 982 provides that the State will provide a supplemental retirement match of up to \$600 for an employee that either contributes at least \$600 to their supplemental retirement or pays down their student loan debt by at least \$600.

The staffing levels in state government are historically low, and the vacancy rates are historically high. HB 982 is important legislation to help us start to rebuild our state government. We should be identifying those state jobs that are suitable for high school graduates and working with local school systems to promote a career in state government. For many of our members, a state job was their entry point into the middle class. In state government, you are evaluated based on your merits and if you do good work, state jobs can provide the income stability, health care, and retirement security to live a happy life and take care of your family.

Others are driven to state jobs right after college out of a duty of public service and wanting to help people and keep us safe. These public servants deserve assistance with their student loan repayments.

We are grateful to the Speaker for making this a top priority issue. We have some minor technical amendments that we’d like to work with the committee on but support HB 982 fully and urge a favorable report. Thank you.

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An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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