



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 116

January 24, 2023

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee
FROM: Mayor Brandon M. Scott
RE: House Bill 116 – Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery - Collective Bargaining
POSITION: Support

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 116.

HB116 grants the employees of the Walters Art Museum collective bargaining rights and the opportunity and option to move forward with the recognition of their Union.

The Walters Art Museum is one of the finest cultural institutions in Baltimore City and in the state of Maryland, created by a state law in 1933 to oversee works of art that had been gifted to Baltimore City by philanthropist Henry Walters. Because the museum was created so long ago, it is caught in a gap in the State of Maryland's labor laws. Employees of the Walters Art Museum announced in the Spring of 2021 that they had formed a union, stating that the union has majority support. However, the management of the Walters has yet to recognize the formation of this union.

It has been difficult to see these workers fight for collective bargaining rights in the midst of an anti-union employer campaign. To no avail, I have reached out to the Walters Art Museum myself on a number of occasions requesting that we come to a resolution.

An efficient way to resolve this oversight would be for the General Assembly to authorize a union recognition and collective bargaining process for the Walters Art Museum, just as the General Assembly has done for other entities and local governments. Delegate Lewis' proposed legislation is based on similar processes that the legislature enacted for the Baltimore Police Department.

This process would require both the management of the Walters and the employees' union to abide by the results of an election overseen by a neutral third party, and then bargain in good faith if a majority of employees vote for a union. This is a process that is fair to all involved.

For the above reasons, I respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 116.