



# Metro Washington Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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*An AFL-CIO "Union City"*

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31 January 2023

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and august members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the 150,000 active and retired members of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO (MWC), I come before you today urging your support for **Maryland S.B. 0352** legislation that would enable Maryland's county public library workers to organize for collective bargaining rights. Unfortunately, current state laws do not provide such a pathway for thousands in the state's workforce to exercise their constitutional right to join a union.

Collective bargaining is not only necessary because it is a constitutional right. It also provides pathways for workers to work their way into America's Middle Class. In addition, workers can access better healthcare, paid family leave, and other benefits that help support themselves and their families. Not only does Collective Bargaining Agreements improve wages and benefits but studies show how they also improve Diversity and Inclusion outcomes for underrepresented such as women and minorities.

Recently, the AFL-CIO reported on the newly released union membership data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2022, 16 million people became union workers with an increase of 273,000 people from the previous year. Furthermore, union membership became more diverse: the entire increase in unionization was amongst workers of color. Of all minority groups, black workers continue to have the highest unionization rates.

As stated by Senator King and the Brothers and Sisters of the Machinists Union, this legislation does not guarantee union organizing or require library employees to form a union. Instead, it provides currently unorganized workers the necessary steps to show interest in a vote to have union representation, should they wish to do so.

Librarians in Prince George's County represented by my home union UFCW and those in Baltimore County represented by the Machinists have proven the need for such legislation. I ask that members of this esteemed committee grant the same access to all librarians across the state.

**In closing, I urge you all to vote favorably on S.B 0352 and give unorganized county public library workers the option to bargain collectively. Thank you.**

***Bringing Labor Together Since 1896***  
***www.dclabor.org***