



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 223 - State Government – State Facilities Changes and Closures – Procedures
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 7, 2023**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 223 - State Government – State Facilities Changes and Closures – Procedures. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 223 sets a standard process for the closure of state facilities requiring notice to certified bargaining representatives and public hearings. This applies to any work locations where 25 or more state employees are regularly assigned to work. If a state facility is being closed the department must hold a hearing and notify the General Assembly members that represent the district and any labor organizations that represent the workers employed at the facility. It also requires that the department submit a report to the General Assembly justifying the closure along with its budgetary impact and plans for mitigating the impacts on state employees.

SB 223 aims to repair state government by ending some of the worst practices of the last decade. Maryland has thousands of vacancies and needs to work quickly to fill these positions. The Department of Legislative Services' most recent report on the issue found at least 9,500 vacant positions in higher education, legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Even when it was clear that state vacancies had reached a crisis level, past administrations still kept putting forward plans to close important state facilities. As stated in the Fiscal and Policy note, SB 223 will not require additional state or local funding to implement its straightforward requirements. SB 223 does not stop the closure of state facilities but it does require that impacted workers, through their certified representatives, lawmakers, and the community are all given proper notice and justification for these decisions.

We encourage the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 223