



Official Testimony: **SB 284**
Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery – Collective Bargaining
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Griffith and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. Our union supports SB 284 which protects and encourages union collective bargaining for Walters Art Museum employees. We ask the committee to issue a favorable report.

The right to unionize and collectively bargain is a matter of equity. Equity is about having a seat at the table to negotiate pay, workplace conditions, and benefits that impact employees and their families. Economic justice is the cornerstone of healthy, thriving communities.

For 1199SEIU members, this bill is important because for direct care workers who are often understaffed and underpaid, unionization is an important tool to address job quality, wages, and quality of care. The Journal of Public Health published research last year that unionization and protecting direct care workers' right to collectively bargain has deep implications for patients and health workforce stability¹. When we encourage unionization and collective bargaining, workers are protected, employers have a reliable workforce, and it benefits everyone who relies on workers for service.

The members of 1199SEIU stand behind this piece of legislation because it promotes equity, creates better working conditions, and protects worker's rights. We thank Senator Carter and the Baltimore City Administration in their support to protect the Walters Workers United right to collectively bargain.

When the voices of worker shortages are occurring in every field of the workforce and where employees without unions have little to no power to voice their concerns, this legislation sets precedent for all unions. We encourage this Committee to give SB 284 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
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¹Dill J, Tanem J. Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Unionization in Direct Care Occupations. Am J Public Health. 2022 Nov;112(11):1676-1684. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2022.307022. PMID: 36223582; PMCID: PMC9558197.

