

Favorable Written Testimony

SB 223 – State Government – State Facilities Changes and Closures – Procedures

March 29, 2023

Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Felicia Hawkins, Director of Operations for the Maryland Professional Employees Council (MPEC), AFT Local 6197, the certified collective bargaining agent for professional state employees classified in unit G. MPEC calls for a favorable report to SB 223.

SB 223 has laid out a standardized procedure for closing state institutions, and this must be followed legally. The process includes informing certified labor unions and holding public hearings in work locations with 25 or more state workers. 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 offers a revision to the current state government model by ending some of the oldest and most ineffective practices. According to the Fiscal and Policy note, SB 223 is not going to demand additional funding in order to put its uncomplicated regulations into action. SB 223 does not prevent the closure of state facilities. Nonetheless, it mandates that individuals who will be affected by such decisions should be given appropriate notification along with a valid explanation.

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