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**HB 515 - Workgroup to Study the Fiscal and Operational Viability of Public-Private Partnerships for Calvert County Public Schools
House Appropriations Committee
February 2, 2024**

INFORMATIONAL

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide informational testimony on HB 515. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 300,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

HB 515 creates a workgroup to study public private partnership (P3) for Calvert County Public Schools. This workgroup should include representation for workers that will be impacted by these discussions. We encourage the committee to consider the following amendment:

On Page 2,

- 1. Substituting “.” for “;” on Line 2.*
- 2. Inserting at Line 3 - “(7) two members representing building trades workers or school employees, appointed by the Maryland State & DC AFL-CIO.”*

HB 515 appears to lack accountability and oversight which are of paramount importance when spending taxpayers’ money. Public trust in government is predicated on the belief that our institutions are spending our money in a fiscally responsible way. In order to do that, there must exist adequate oversight on every dollar spent.

While P3s are commonly advertised as a way to help state and local governments complete projects at lower costs, they involve a level of “privatization” where profits are placed above the public good and transparency for taxpayers is nearly non-existent.

The Workgroup should look to past legislation considered by the General Assembly to mitigate these concerns by applying oversight to Maryland’s P3s, and providing much needed accountability for all of our public works projects where P3s are used.