



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 517 - State Personnel - Whistleblower Law - Procedures and Remedies
(First Amendment and Public Employee Protection Act)
House Appropriations Committee
March 6, 2024**

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 HB 517. 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.

HB 517 strengthens and expands the whistleblower provisions for Executive Branch employees to include threatened personnel actions and retaliatory actions that negatively impact workers. It also assigns the Office of Attorney General with investigating and enforcing alleged violations of the whistleblower law. HB 517 includes the ability for complainants to receive monetary damages and recoup reasonable legal costs.

Whistleblower protections are an important part of good governance. By including threatened personnel and retaliatory actions and not just reprisals that actually occur, HB 517 helps combat hostile office cultures that make reporting bad behavior impossible.

We encourage the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 517.