

CORY V. McCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Health and Human Services

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Executive Nominations Committee

Legislative Policy Committee

Joint Committee on Gaming Oversight



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3165 · 301-858-3165
800-492-7122 Ext. 3165
Cory.McCray@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes to SB 188

Title: Arbitration Reform for State Employee's Act of 2024
Budget and Tax Committee
Hearing: January 17, 2024

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to request a favorable vote for **SB188**, the Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2024, which aims to enhance the collective bargaining process for State employees in Maryland. **SB188** introduces key improvements, including workable timelines for negotiations, neutral arbitration in case of an impasse, and binding interest arbitration for effective resolution. The bill addresses the need for enforceable bargaining timelines, particularly in higher education, preventing wasteful expenditure on prolonged negotiations. Binding interest arbitration, a proven concept in other states, becomes crucial for Maryland state employees who lack the right to strike.

SB188 aligns with successful practices in other jurisdictions, including the Maryland Transit Administration, without compromising government stability. It addresses past challenges and emphasizes fair and equitable labor relations.

The support from the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) adds credibility, reflecting collaborative efforts to refine the role of the mediator and arbitrator. While the bill doesn't alter legislative budget discretion, making awards binding on the executive may require further consideration.

Aligning with national and local trends is imperative, as 27 states and D.C. already authorize binding interest arbitration. Maryland should be in the forefront in adopting practices proven successful elsewhere.

Before closing, I would like to add, the OAG looked at the bill and concluded in an advice letter in December that the Legislature's discretion over the budget remains unaltered in the bill. To make any award binding on the executive however, we do still need to make this a constitutional amendment this year.

I urge a favorable vote for **SB188**, representing a critical step towards fostering a fair, efficient, and cooperative labor relations environment for Maryland state employees.

Respectfully,



Cory V. McCray
45th District