

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Budget & Taxation Committee
SB1080 – Maryland Department of Health - Pay Rates
Feb 27, 2024**

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and committee members. My name is Jerry Smith, President of the Maryland Professional Employees Council (MPEC), AFT Local 6197, the certified collective bargaining agent for professional state employees classified in unit G. MPEC is calling for a favorable report on SB1080. This bill requires that certain employees at the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents and Clifton T. Perkins Hospital, who do not currently receive the forensic pay rate that all other employees working in these facilities receive, be paid an equal forensic pay rate.

This bill allows the 9 educators employed at certain Department of Health facilities to be included in the forensic pay premium. Their dedication and commitment to educating children and adolescents with high acuity levels, as well as mental and emotional health issues, deserve recognition through the forensic pay this bill provides.

Educators working in facilities like RICA and Perkins Hospital possess unique abilities and rare qualities that are essential for meeting the demands of educating students in these specialized environments. Supporting and retaining these educators is crucial for Maryland, as it enables the state to draw on their institutional experience and expertise. By doing so, the state can ensure that students receive the best possible education and support.

For these reasons, MPEC again calls for a favorable report to SB 1080.

Thank you.