

Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee
Testimony of Chris Todd, member, AFSCME Maryland
SB 192 – AN ACT concerning State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Supervisory Employees
February 1st, 2024

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Christopher Todd and I am a Field Supervisor in the Department of Probation and Parole, DPSCS at the Reisterstown Plaza Headquarters. I am writing in support of SB 192. Collective bargaining is important to me because if frontline supervisors have a path to formally advocate for ourselves and our teams, we can provide better services to our communities.

I have been an employee with the state for eighteen years, and for much of my career I was in one office where I worked hard, and eventually elevated to the position I hold now. However, some years ago my manager started fostering a toxic work environment that would have been unsustainable for anyone.

It started with assigning more tasks to me, which at first I didn't mind because I'm a hard worker and, like many of us, committed to our mission. Then they started working me out of my classification on a regular basis without proper training or support. Soon after my manager started evaluating me using standards no other supervisors had to live up to. So, to make up for their disapproval I was assigned more work. I felt like I constantly had to prove myself and I was always terrified of the criticism I would face coming into work every day.

I knew something had to be done but there are limited options for supervisors to seek resolution. I tried filing a complaint, but nothing came of it. Eventually I had to put in for a transfer and leave the office I had been committed to for over a decade.

Conversely, with collective bargaining rights frontline supervisors would be able to have a voice in the anti-harassment policies in our offices and how they're held to account. We would be able to form labor/management committees with our upper management to come to resolutions and protect ourselves and our teams from unhealthy working conditions that lead to high turnover and low performance. The dignity of a voice in our treatment means more supervisors will stay in state service and be able to train higher quality workers below us for the benefit of our agencies.

I love the work I do, and I'm happy I have a respectful manager now. I'm asking you to support this bill so that no matter who is in charge, each employee knows they deserve respect when they come to work, and if they're being treated unfairly, they have the support and resources they need through their collective bargaining agreement.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 292.

Christopher Todd
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