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Patrick Moran – President

SB 477 – Time to Serve Act of 2024

**Finance Committee
February 29, 2024**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports SB 477. This legislation increases the amount of leave state employees can use for military and disaster service from 15 days to 30 days. We applaud the administration for supporting state employees who in addition to their employment with the state, also serve our communities in the armed forces or as disaster services volunteers.

Acknowledging the need for additional military and disaster leave reflects the state's commitment to preparedness and resilience. In a time when we are working to rebuild our state government, this increased benefit also contributes to retaining dedicated employees who have an extraordinary commitment to public service.

We believe state employees who work in our public higher education institutions should be included as well. Our members who work in higher education are equally committed to serving our communities and deserve to have equal benefits to state employees who work under the executive branch.

SB 477 demonstrates a wonderful collaboration between labor and management to help Maryland become a state that serves. AFSCME and the Department of Budget and Management worked together to increase this benefit for bargaining unit represented employees. All state employees who choose to serve deserve these benefits. For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide a favorable report on the Time to Serve Act of 2024.