

Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee
Testimony of Brenda Lowe, 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 Brenda Lowe and I work as a Customer Agent Supervisor at the Essex Branch Office of the MVA. I am a proud AFSCME member who has been working for the state of Maryland for 25 years.

As a supervisor, our work doesn't consist of just sitting at a desk. We have to multitask all day long, not only helping management and customer agent 3's and below, but helping customers as well, and doing frontline work. Sometimes you end up doing three things at once. After doing this all day, you then come home to almost the same thing. It can be tiring and have a mental impact on you as well. Thank goodness the benefits are decent.

Within the last month, we've had at least five employees leave our office, and I know of a few more who are planning to try to transfer or leave the organization as a whole because of the poor morale in the office. It can be very stressful, especially if you are short staffed and have a lot of appointments coming in that day. It's frustrating as a supervisor to see what is happening in our agencies, and our offices, and not have a protected voice in bargaining to help advocate for solutions.

After working with the organization for 25 years, I have been accustomed to working with a short staff for years. If a person is not happy in their workplace, you can not help them stay if you have no power to speak up for the changes they need. I would like to be there to help support the employee to the best of my ability, but it's difficult to keep people with our agency when we don't have a means to advocate for our concerns as supervisors, and no guarantee that we will ever see our issues meaningfully addressed.

Supervisors are your front line of defense in this organization. We are the ones who are doing the schedules, making sure customers are getting the proper help that they need in difficult situations, and always putting our best foot forward to assure our agents are being taken care of as well. Without supervisors, the organization would not be where it is today.

Please support SB 192 and enable collective bargaining for supervisors and let us continue to be a part of the solution in our agencies.

Brenda Lowe
Customer Agent Supervisor
Essex Branch Office, MVA