

Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee
Testimony of Kendi Burns, 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 Kendi Burns, and I am a Correctional Dietary Supervisor with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. In my 20 years with the State, I have learned that more than anything, it is respect that keeps people in a job. That respect can be shown in a variety of ways, but more often than not, it is only given when there is a strong, open dialogue. In the absence of Collective Bargaining, that dialogue is not only lacking strength, in most workplaces it does not exist at all. What we are now facing is a decreasing retention rate and rapidly accelerating resignations.

The problem with retention, as I'm sure you know, is that it forms a cascading crisis. As we lose critical employees, the employees we do have are increasingly overworked, resulting in further increased resignations. The cycle continues until the infrastructure that keeps our state safe and functioning is no longer up to the task. We have not reached that point, but we have reached the point where we must address the crisis head on. In the case of State Employees, some of these burdens have been able to be eased, or at least allocated fairly, within the confines of Collective Bargaining. Supervisors, of course, lack this right. This simple legislation would expand that right to workers in Maryland that do just as much as everyone else to keep the State working, and would help us feel respected, heard, and seen in the jobs we do every day. Please support SB 192. Please support Maryland state supervisors.

Kendi Burns
Correctional Dietary Supervisor
Patuxent, DPSCS