

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Hansel Motiram**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Hansel Motiram, and I am a Library Associate at the Glen Burnie branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I pride myself on independence, and my ability to support myself. But with cost of living increases, and pay that isn't keeping up with inflation, this has become a challenge. Collective bargaining would ensure that I could continue living independently, something vital to my mental well being and that allows my family to focus on helping my other two siblings get started in life and pay their bills.

My workplace is made up of incredible people who do amazing work. But I'm concerned our library wouldn't run at all if my coworkers weren't the sort of people to put community over their own well being. I know how our PTHs struggle to make ends meet despite working multiple jobs and picking up extra shifts, yet they are reluctant to go elsewhere because they understand how important their services are. My peers take on work above and beyond what is asked, networking for outreach, buying their own materials, offering translation services, working in cold or otherwise unsafe conditions just because they know the work simply needs to be done. To do all that and then have no voice in what our needs are is difficult. People often burn out trying to figure out how to make it all work while juggling the regular stresses of life.

I personally work extra shifts to make sure I have enough money, and tutor as well on the side. It's sometimes difficult because I know just one car accident or medical emergency could ruin me. While I'm lucky enough to have parents that would allow me back home, due to the sickness of my brother and the attention he needs, it would put a strain on all of us. I also know many don't have the same option. I worry every time it snows that our older building care technician will face difficulties, or have to over exert himself because our building is the oldest in the system and has the highest volume of patrons. I also know it doesn't need to be like this.

Collective bargaining is not an answer to all of these problems immediately, but it is an answer to the most central question: How can we be heard? How can we have a say in negotiating over our pay and working conditions? I urge you to support SB 591, the Library Workers' Empowerment Act, and to give us a seat at the table.

Hansel Motiram  
Library Associate  
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