

**SB0591\_Library\_Workers\_Empowerment\_Act\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0591**  
**Education – Public Libraries -Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Lam

**Committee:** Finance

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0591 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

The rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively with employers ensures that both workers and management come to the table as equals. Workers have organized in many different industries and have been able to ensure that they have good working conditions, health care, and reasonable wages.

It does cost employers more. There is absolutely no argument about that. Employers will always say that they can't afford to have workers organize because it eats into their profits, and often they prevail. Our members would respectfully ask you to look at this from the side of the workers. Is it right for an employer to pay sub-standard wages, or provide poor working conditions so that THEY can make more profit, at the expense of their workers? Any business that cannot pay a decent wage and provide decent working conditions does not deserve to be in business.

Public libraries, like other businesses should not be operating by taking advantage of workers. They should be enthusiastic in their support for good working conditions and good wages, and should welcome organizing and collective bargaining.

This bill will allow for collective bargaining for public library workers. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

## **2.29.24 MSEA Senate Bill 591 Testimony\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE**  
**Senate Bill 591**  
**Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers**  
**Empowerment Act)**

**Senate Finance Committee**  
**February 29, 2024**

**Christian Gobel**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 591. Senate Bill 591 grants employees of public libraries the freedom to form, join, and participate in an employee organization and to engage in activities related to collective bargaining. MSEA supports all legislation that expands and enhances collective bargaining rights for public employees. MSEA stands in solidarity with all unions in the labor movement to build worker power and ensure that all workers have a voice in their workplace.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Senate Bill 591 is common sense legislation to promote workers' rights for employees of public libraries. The bill enables employees to engage in protected concerted activities for their mutual aid and protection, prohibits employers and employee organizations from engaging in certain unfair labor practices, establishes election procedures for the certification of exclusive representatives, and requires good faith bargaining between employers and certified exclusive representatives concerning wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

MSEA strongly believes that communities, government, the public, and workers benefit through the practice and procedure of collective bargaining. Enabling workers to have a voice in their workplace and working conditions enhances the



delivery of public services, creates a more stable and healthier workforce, and allows labor and management to address potential disputes in a responsible and efficient manner for the benefit of all. For these reasons, MSEA will always stand in solidarity with workers who seek the right to join unions and engage in collective bargaining.

**We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 591.**

**SB 591\_AFSCME3\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Denise Gilmore

Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran – President

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**SB 591 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining  
(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**Finance Committee  
February 29, 2024**

**FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 supports SB 591. This legislation enables collective bargaining rights for public library workers across the state. SB 591 applies to all Maryland public library systems except Baltimore, Prince George’s, and Montgomery counties who have unionized already and have these rights codified into law. For the included counties, SB 591 will provide a modern, fair, and consistent process for public library workers to unionize and collectively bargain.

Libraries are the cornerstones of our community. They are so much more than just books – they provide technology, job search support, classes and resources for families, COVID test kits and masks, and so much more. Our libraries offer integral support to the public, and this is a crucial opportunity to support the library workers who make our libraries run. Library workers include librarians, shelvers, circulation assistants, cataloging assistants, technology and video coordinators, building care technicians, IT workers, library associates, and more. Library workers deserve to have collective bargaining rights, and a voice in their working conditions, pay, and benefits. Instead of a piecemeal approach that covers only some library workers in the state, this legislation will allow workers in public libraries across Maryland the opportunity to choose if they want to form a union without coming back to the legislature year after year.

AFSCME has organized tens of thousands of library workers across the country. In Maryland, AFSCME already represents workers at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the University System of Maryland, Baltimore City Community College, St. Mary’s College of Maryland, and Morgan State University. Library workers in both Howard County and Anne Arundel County are organizing their unions with AFSCME Council 3 as well.

Similar legislation passed the House last year with bipartisan support. Please support our public library workers and provide a favorable report on SB 591.

# **SB 591 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective**

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV





# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**Gerald W. Jackson**

**SB 591 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining  
(Library Workers Empowerment Act)  
Senate Finance Committee  
February 29, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 591. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 provided millions of workers with the right to form unions and collectively bargain with their employers. It established the official policy of the United States was to promote collective bargaining through worker organizing. This was re-established by President Joe Biden, who issued Executive Order 14025, which stated, "the policy of the United States is to encourage worker organizing and collective bargaining and to promote equality of bargaining power between employers and employees." Unfortunately, millions of workers were left out from the National Labor Relations Act, leaving them without a legal process for their human right to form a union. These excluded workers include thousands of public sector library workers across the state of Maryland.

SB 591 is enabling legislation granting collective bargaining rights to public library workers across the state. It establishes an equitable process for workers to democratically select exclusive representatives that can bargain with employers over terms and conditions of employment. SB 591 does not require library workers to join a union, but creates a fair process with neutral arbiters, to certify representatives if the workers choose to unionize.

Past bills granting public library workers the right to organize focused on single counties or library systems, but this disjointed approach is time consuming and treats workers' essential rights like something they need to beg for from the state of Maryland before they can exercise it. SB 591 makes it clear that the State of Maryland values the rights of public library workers to exercise their freedom. It also seeks to conform union certification processes for library workers with the recently passed Public Employees Relations Act of 2023.

Collective bargaining is an important tool for workers in the fight for equity, social justice, and inclusion. Library workers are overwhelmingly women. The AFL-CIO's Department of Professional Employees (DPE) analyzed 2020 Census Bureau data and found that over 83% of librarians were women. Even within the profession women have been discriminated against in terms of pay and benefits, with women earning only 81.5% of what men in the same positions made. Union contracts are an essential part of the fight against the gender pay gap, helping to ensure that workers receive equal pay for equal work.

Maryland library workers have shown tremendous interest in organizing unions. Workers at Baltimore County Public Libraries voted to approve their first collective bargaining agreement in May 2022. In November 2022, workers at the Enoch Pratt Library System in Baltimore City voted 218-12 in favor of forming a union.

This bill sends a strong message to public library workers that their rights are respected and they have the freedom, supported by their state, to join together in a union and negotiate with their employers if they so choose.

We strongly encourage legislators to support SB 591.

**SB591\_Andy\_Yamazaki\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Andy Yamazaki**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Andy Yamazaki, and I am a Senior Data Specialist with Howard County Public Library System. I am writing today to urge you to support SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, which would grant collective bargaining rights to library workers across the state of Maryland.

It is my hope that through collective bargaining my coworkers and I will be able to advocate for ourselves and the public we serve. By bargaining over our wages and working conditions, I hope to be able to make my home life more manageable in an increasingly expensive and financially challenging world.

In addition, the stress of our jobs does not stop at the front door. Many staff members carry home the anxiety from our many concerns at work. Without a voice at the table, the interests of those working “in the trenches,” are not heard. The effect is that we often feel unseen and our challenges are not understood.

The fact is that Libraries are a critical part of our society. The staff of each library provide services that are indispensable. Without collective bargaining rights, the interests of the staff will never be heard, let alone addressed. We love our patrons, we love the library, and we love the communities in which we live. Without a union, the staff that provide said services will slowly atrophy and leave, leading to dire circumstances for all. If we want to ensure that our libraries are around for the generations that come after us, we need to be able to advocate on behalf of the people that keep them running. We need to be able to advocate on behalf of ourselves. Please support SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, and pass collective bargaining rights for every library worker in Maryland. Thank you.

Andy Yamazaki  
Senior Data Specialist  
HCLS

**SB591\_Caitlin\_Felder\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Caitlin Felder**  
**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 Caitlin Felder, and I am a Teens Instructor and Research Specialist at the Savage branch of Howard County Libraries. I am writing today to urge passage of the Library Workers Empowerment Act. This legislation is necessary for the health and safety of our libraries.

It is no secret that the cost of living is rising. Rent, groceries, gas, interest rates on loans--they are constantly going up, and I know I'm not the only person living paycheck to paycheck at my job and feeling like one emergency will put me at risk of financial ruin. Being able to save, being able to afford a better quality of life, and set financial goals for the future are some of my hopes with collective bargaining. Through bargaining I hope to fight for better wages for myself and my coworkers. Maybe then I can move into the community that I work in and decrease my commute, or get a car that is more reliable. However, my current salary makes that impossible. I know I'm not alone in this, and that library workers across the state are facing the same financial constraints I am and having to make similar difficult decisions for themselves and their families.

These issues have compounded to cause a staffing crisis. Less staff means higher workloads on everyone else, and even though we keep voicing that we need more staff, the system leadership keeps pushing new initiatives, putting more and more on everyone's plates. Sometimes I don't get a break until my day is almost over. More often, I am eating lunch at my desk while working. This is not sustainable.

I would like us, as an organization, to acknowledge what our staff is reasonably capable of given the limits that the system leadership wants to put on our staffing numbers. I would like us to have a voice in the libraries that we work for and love. More than anything, I would like every library worker in the state of Maryland to have the choice to collectively bargain. Please pass SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, and make us partners at work.

Caitlin Felder  
Teens Instructor and Research Specialist  
Howard County Library System

**SB591\_Chерise\_Tasker\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Cherise Tasker**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Cherise Tasker, and I am an Instructor and Research Specialist with Howard County Library System, where I have worked for eleven years. At Howard County Library, we have a talented workforce that is closely in touch with the community. If our staff had a voice, we'd be better stewards of the public money and resources that are entrusted to us.

Regarding safety, we have potentially violent customers and do not have adequate safeguards in place to protect staff. For example, at my desk, I have no phone, no cell service, and no close access to a panic button. Feeling unsafe at work is something you bring home with you. When you hear of news stories of workplace violence, it triggers anxiety.

I feel that I am not being paid to work to my full potential. I have a graduate degree and extensive work experience, but my ideas are often silenced and I feel undervalued. Simultaneously, when my colleagues and I are asked to do jobs we were not hired for, the work product suffers. When time consuming and costly projects are initiated by library leadership and not completed, the public misses out on services they need.

Library workers are first responders in countless ways. For many in the community, we are the one source of free support. If library workers are not allowed to do their jobs safely and to the best of their ability, the money the community invests in the library is wasted. We want to make sure that does not happen. We want an open line of communication. We want to collectively bargain. Please support SB 591, and give us the ability to be active partners in our workplaces.

Cherise Tasker  
Instructor and Research Specialist  
HCLS



**SB591\_Christopher\_Moon\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Christopher Moon Kim**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Christopher Moon Kim, and I am a Driver with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I am a part time worker, which presents me with unique challenges. My part time hours are dependent on whether or not there is an outreach event. I am not compensated if the events are canceled, but I also am unable to pick up shifts at other jobs as a result of the scheduling. This is additionally frustrating because part time workers are entitled to almost no benefits, which has made my life both personally and financially challenging. I am dependent on other part time jobs as well that also lack benefits.

Though my local branch managers have tried to get permission from headquarters to expand my job role and my wages, we have been told that my best option is to apply for a different position. As the sole driver of the mobile book van, this worries me for the future of this important program. Beyond just expanding physical access to the library's books, our mobile van also brings critical tech resources into our community. We expand accessibility to library services, but we do not make the role attractive enough to retain someone in it. If we were to have collective bargaining, my concerns would be taken more seriously and addressed with a sense of urgency. As the primary outreach driver, my issues cannot be prioritized without collective bargaining rights.

I want everyone to understand that libraries are community centers and every neighborhood depends on the accessibility to the libraries' services. Collective bargaining rights will help improve those services and increase resources for the community while giving library workers protection from burnout, discrimination, and neglect. Preserving library resources means giving library workers bargaining rights. This body is empowered to do that. Please pass SB 591, and help us continue to help our communities.

Christopher Moon Kim  
Driver  
AACPL

**SB591\_Colin\_Chappel\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Colin Chappell**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Colin Chappell, and I am a Library Associate II at the Linthicum branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system.

Our administration's response to the pandemic was an eye-opening experience. While it was fantastic that staff continued to be employed while the library was closed, we were never consulted about future steps taken towards reopening, neither in terms of when to reopen nor in terms of how to reopen. That top-down, board-driven decision-making has had deleterious effects on many aspects of our work and resulted in unpopular and unfair policies that fail to account for branch staff input.

Additionally, nearly everyone who works in a branch is a victim of the "working out of classification" issue. Additional out-of-classification responsibilities are often rotated, sometimes without warning, to staff who are not compensated more and who may not receive proper training beforehand.

I have often raised issues with branch management in the past. Some issues have been sincerely addressed, but so much of it depends on the quality of your supervisor and your branch management. If they hear you, they can often effect change. But when they don't, which is often, it can be almost impossible to have your voice heard in a meaningful way within the organization. I want to standardize this process. The quality of your work, or of your life, should not be dependent on who supervises you. It should be dependent on a contract, one that is collectively bargained and achieved through a collaborative process. This bill allows that, it brings us together, and it gives us a voice. Please support SB 591.

Colin Chappell  
Library Associate II  
AACPL

**SB591\_Davon\_Thompson\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Davon Thompson**  
**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 Davon Thompson, and I am a Building Care Technician at the Severna Park branch of Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I have worked for AACPL for the last twenty years, and in that time I have watched Anne Arundel County go from an expensive place to live to an unsustainable one. We deserve fair representation, a livable wage, and all the rights afforded to other workers in Maryland.

We are frontline employees, and the work I do keeping the library facilities open is important. But we do not always feel important. We do not always feel respected. Much of the time, we don't even feel heard. Collective bargaining offers us the opportunity to engage directly with our counties and libraries on the issues that matter most to us. It is not a magic bullet, but it is a structural solution. This bill gives us the power to advocate for ourselves, and I hope you will support it. By doing so, know that you are supporting the libraries and library workers of this state. Please support SB591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, and support library workers across Maryland.

Davon Thompson  
Building Care Technician  
Anne Arundel County Public Library

**SB591\_Eliana\_Holgate\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Eliana Holgate**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Eliana Holgate, and I am a Children's Instructor & Research Specialist at the Elkridge Branch of the Howard County Library System. I wanted to write today to talk about the realities of our libraries. Front-line library staff are the experts on their communities, with whom we interact every day. When all decisions are made at a remove from that direct service, it diminishes the quality and efficiency of what can be offered by our library system. It also destroys morale in our branches, which in turn lowers retention rates.

System leaders are often very disconnected from the reality of day-to-day branch operations. They make top-down decisions and dictate updates, while branch staff are put in a position to "make it work" without appropriate support. Our union will give us a voice to help library leadership understand the logistical needs and challenges that are faced when implementing their initiatives.

Many excellent employees who have been frustrated with the way that system leadership operates have left our library system, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge and talent that served our community in an outstanding manner. Our union will help us address issues that have driven away wonderful staff. Sometimes staff learn about new initiatives and decisions at the same time as the public with little or no further details about how things will be handled logistically. This makes it difficult to implement, and puts a strain on our staff and system.

We are thrilled that the General Assembly granted collective bargaining rights to Howard County Library employees back in 2013, and I want to see collective bargaining rights expanded to all library employees across the state of Maryland. My coworkers and I recently voted yes to form our union, and we are so excited to be moving to the collective bargaining process and begin negotiating over our concerns with our library leadership. Collective bargaining gives our concerns a voice, our issues a solution, and our libraries a strong future. Please pass SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act.

Eliana Holgate  
Children's Instructor & Research Specialist  
HCLS



**SB591\_Elinatan\_Nelson\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Elinatan Nelson**  
**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 Ellie Nelson, and I am a Collection Development Assistant PTH at the Anne Arundel County Public Library Headquarters. As a PTH I am responsible for ensuring our collections are complete, accurate, and fulfilling. I'm proud to work for our county public library, but it's difficult to imagine building a career here when I feel unheard at work and underappreciated and undervalued by our system.

I rely on my job to keep me afloat, but it is not always up to the task. Though we are told our libraries are fundamental parts of our community, it is difficult to feel that I am a part of that community at all, since I can barely afford to live here. Because of the staffing crisis we have, I have to handle issues that should be dealt with by more senior employees, and things often fall through the cracks completely as no one is able to track everything. We have asked for more hours, more support, and more attention, but we are told it is impossible. Collective bargaining rights for libraries have been litigated time and time again in Maryland, but this bill puts an end to that. It gives all of us a fair opportunity to work together to build libraries and communities that we are proud of. I am ready to begin that process, so please support SB 591.

Ellie Nelson  
Collection Development Assistant PTH  
Anne Arundel County Public Library

**SB591\_Emma\_Andrews\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Emma Andrews**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Emma Andrews, and I am a Library Associate II with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I work at the Mountain Road branch, where I help serve the community of Mountain Road, and the patrons that rely on us. In collective bargaining, I am looking for security. I want to be able to plan for my future, and to know that I will have a voice in how it plays out. Having that sense of security to actually plan for a future would be something I've never had before.

One of the biggest issues in our library that affects me directly is one of equity and how our library administration often fails to follow through on commitments made to staff to address issues. Even the easiest of fixes get tossed aside in favor of initiatives that may look attractive, but ultimately do not make us safer. We often speak about trust and communication at AACPL but do nothing to foster either. Our marginalized staff are often working in an environment where we are left asking in futility for help.

The effect of this is stress, burnout, and constant worry about the stability of our positions. When it comes down to it, we need the ability to form a union. Every one of us deserves a seat at the table. Every one of us needs the right to advocate for each other and ourselves. Every one of us should have the right to stand together in solidarity to work together to improve all of our lives. Library workers deserve nothing different than any other worker. We don't want to be treated differently, we just want to be treated equally. I urge you to pass SB 591, and to give our library workers the empowerment they deserve.

Emma Andrews  
Library Associate II  
AACPL

**SB591\_Larra\_Cuffley\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Riordan

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Larra Cuffley**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Laura Cuffley, and I am a Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist at the Glenwood branch of the Howard County Library System. I am writing to urge you to pass SB 591, which would give library workers the right to collectively bargain.

For me the disparity of expectation between adult & children’s instructional staff is a constant issue. We regularly teach 8-10 classes per month, plus outreach and school visits, as well as special committee projects. Our home life is impacted significantly as well. We often work 7 day work weeks and have limited leave approval, even with more than sufficient PTO. If we speak up about the stresses we feel and the issues we see in our branches, we are often made to feel ashamed for having said anything at all. This is largely due to inconsistent or non-existent continuing education training or personnel development training. All of this contributes to a very high turnover of staff due to inflexible policy and top- down decisions.

I am very tired. I am tired of us having our voices continuously silenced by coercion. I’m tired of not seeing my family because I am working every weekend. I think there should be complete transparency in decisions affecting staff and that staff should be valued enough to have significant input before changes are enacted. I believe all of this can be achieved through collective bargaining. I urge you to pass SB 591. Thank you.

Larra Cuffley

Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist

HCLS

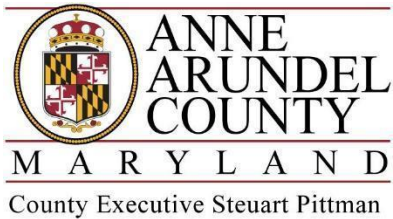


**Anne Arundel County \_FAV\_SB591.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FAV





February 29, 2024

**Senate Bill 591**

**Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**Senate Finance and Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 591 – Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act), which establishes a collective bargaining process for full- or part-time non-management employees of public library systems throughout the State.

Collective bargaining is a valuable tool for workers to come together as one voice and advocate for equity and inclusion. But this bill will not require any library workers to join a union - this bill just provides a path to unionization and leaves it up to library workers to certify representatives if the workers choose to unionize. Under current state law, there is no uniform guidance for library employees to organize for collective bargaining if they wish to do so. As a result, libraries have disjointed and complicated processes that vary widely by local jurisdictions. This bill addresses this issue by establishing a uniform and efficient process that will benefit both employees and employers.

Library workers are committed public servants who play an essential role in our community. Our libraries offer a safe and welcoming environment that provides residents with internet access, educational and cultural programs, and other essential services. In fact, library workers are often on the front lines of critical issues as the primary distributor of information and resources, such as during the COVID-19 crisis. Most recently, in Anne Arundel County, they played a critical part in our pilot gun violence mitigation effort by distributing more than 4,000 free gun locks. We are currently partnering with our library workers to distribute 7,000 Chromebooks to eligible residents through the state's Connected Devices program.

This bill sends a strong message and will empower library staff to address challenges and provide better service for all. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 591.

Stuart Pittman  
County Executive

**HB609.pdf**

Uploaded by: Julie McCashland

Position: FAV

Good morning,

My name is Julie McCashland and I am a citizen of Harford County. I am proud to be an employee of the Harford County Public Library. The staff in my system are dedicated and hardworking and are an asset to the communities in which we serve.

We are in need of your help. Like so many in public service, we are faced with challenging working conditions, like being short staffed, having low morale throughout the system, and lack of respect from upper management. We want to have a voice in our workplace, and a seat at the table, but we are currently not able to do this. That's where you come in.

I am writing to ask that you support and pass HB609- Library Workers Empowerment Act as drafted.

This bill would enable unorganized library workers across the state to unionize and collectively bargain if they wish to do so. I urge you to support Maryland library workers with a favorable vote on this legislation.

This bill does not guarantee union representation but instead gives library workers the option to exercise our constitutional right to join a labor union if we wish.

I am eager to see library employees throughout the state be given this opportunity that other counties in Maryland already have.

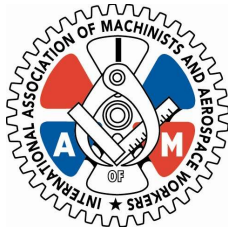
I strongly support this legislation in its original form and would appreciate your support as well.

Thank you for your time,  
Julie McCashland

**2024 02 28\_HB 609 Ewan Testimony Support[6].pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Ewan

Position: FAV



## **HB 609 - SUPPORT**

Laura Ewan

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

[lewan@iamaw.org](mailto:lewan@iamaw.org) | (301) 967-4510

### **HB 609 - SUPPORT Maryland County Public Library Systems' Employee Collective Bargaining Rights**

February 28, 2024

My name is Laura Ewan, and I am Associate General Counsel for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). I am honored to submit this testimony in support of HB 609, a crucial piece of legislation that will grant the employees of many of Maryland's County Public Library Systems the right to select a representative of their choosing to bargain on their behalf for their wages, hours, and working conditions.

In Maryland, each county library system exists as a creature of state statute. State law governing library structure and operations allows for boards of trustees or county governments to operate library systems and set wages, hours, and working conditions. However, the state laws do not automatically grant these entities the right to enter into binding collective bargaining agreements absent a grant of such authority from the legislature. That's what HB 609 would do—grant that authority to each County's Library employing authority to enter into a collective bargaining agreement, should the Library employees vote to be represented by a union.

Following the success of the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) Collective Bargaining law in 2021, the IAM was contacted by library workers from county library systems across Maryland, each looking for help in their workplaces. So, it just makes sense—for your busy schedules, and for these employees—to address the issue statewide. HB 609 does just that.

It is also imperative that the law grant the right for a collective bargaining agreement to include a provision for arbitration of disciplinary actions beyond the Board of Trustees-overseen process already provided for by Maryland law. This allows workers to benefit from having a Union representative during such a harrowing and critical point in their career—defending themselves in light of disciplinary action—in a way that the Board of Trustees process does not. BCPL employees have gained from being able to negotiate this right into their contract.

Employees who work so hard to provide the numerous services that our libraries offer to the community want a voice in the conversations about the direction of the workplace. They want a seat at the table because they love their jobs. And they want meaningful representation to ensure that it stays that way. That is why we enthusiastically support this bill.

Ultimately, HB 609 strikes a balance between protecting workers' Constitutional right to freedom of association with the library administration's obligation to manage the library system in a way most appropriate to their individual communities. Workers choosing to try to unionize are guaranteed anonymity in demonstrating support for a secret-ballot election to be held in a timely manner. If their

election is successful, HB 609 provides next steps for negotiating collective bargaining agreement to be ratified by the employees.

In reading HB 609, you will note management retains their right to exercise control and discretion over the library's operations, direct its employees and all that entails, determine the methods, means, personnel and resources, hire, promote, transfer, and so on. And HB 609 imposes deadlines to resolving negotiation issues at impasse in order for collective bargaining agreements to comply with county budgetary processes. So you see, a great deal of research and thought went into drafting HB 609 to ensure that the roles of each party are respected.

Maryland library employees need this bill passed just to have the opportunity to vote to see if they want to have a representative for collective bargaining purposes. Every single library employee we have spoken to sees this as an opportunity to make the job they love even better. These workers provide critical social and cultural services to Maryland residents, and all they ask is for the opportunity to have a collective voice at the table.

We ask you to vote in favor of HB 609 so library employees across Maryland can have the legal right and the freedom to choose whether they wish to be represented by a union or not for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Thank you.

**SB591\_Hans\_Motiram\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV

**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  
AACPL



**SB591\_Piyali\_Callahan\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Piyali Callahan**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Piyali Callahan, and I am an Instructor & Research Specialist with Howard County Library System. I am writing today because I don't feel heard or seen. Under our current system, a few in upper management make decisions that impact me, my colleagues and the community. Sometimes we as staff learn about changes at the same time as customers. The way decisions are made is very top heavy and out of sync with the life of staff who work in branches. This has led my coworkers and I to come together to form our union, Howard County Library Workers United, with AFSCME.

When one does not feel seen or heard, one loses motivation. I love the actual job and I thrive off knowing that my customers appreciate my work. I want to continue to give my best services to the community I serve. I think we can be a vibrant and dynamic library system, doing fantastic work in the community if the phrase “respect for each other” was seriously enforced. We lacked a basic desk for almost two years to do our job, and it took a herculean effort to get it restored into our branch. Through collective bargaining, we will be able to advocate for the resources we need to serve the public well.

Library staff is the soul of the library. We love our community and do our best to serve our community. Hear us, pay us, let us spend time with our loved ones, give us a proper work life balance so we can thrive. Because we already have collective bargaining rights as library employees in Howard County, my coworkers and I have been able to form our union and look forward to engaging in a collective bargaining process. I want to see all library employees across the state of Maryland enjoy the right to collectively bargain- please pass SB 591 and support our library workers.

Piyali Callahan  
Instructor & Research Specialist  
HCLS



**SB591\_Ryan\_Dize\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Ryan Dize**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Ryan Dize, and I am a Circulation Assistant at the Linthicum Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system.

Collective bargaining is critical for our library systems and would help us have a voice not only with the library board, but also with leadership outside the board. Currently my wife and I are struggling to save enough to buy a home. We certainly couldn't afford to live in Anne Arundel County. With collective bargaining I think we'd have a better shot at achieving our goals and living closer to the community we serve.

I feel our leadership often dismisses the general library worker's opinion despite us being frontline staff with the perspective to see how leadership's decisions are implemented. Several branches have staff shortages because Part-time Hourly (PTH) employees have been routed to a single branch when before we had a similar sized pool of PTH Employees for an entire area. This allowed flexibility in staffing and more hours and experience for PTHs that wanted it. Now that's gone, and I see our library system suffering for it.

I am constantly worried as I look at other states and how their libraries have become battlegrounds for social issues. I am deeply worried that if there's a change on our board we could be in the same predicament. Did you know before our current board we were not allowed to have any LGBTQ+ or Pride decorations? Despite many of my coworkers being LGBTQ+, we couldn't even have a display. We need security for the most vulnerable, and a guarantee that we won't work under the whims of whoever current leadership is, but instead have protections guaranteed in a contract.

I hope library leadership sees that we won't stop trying to achieve our goals and win a protected voice at work. I hope they see how important this is to us. This isn't just about any single issue, it is about the future of our libraries. Please pass SB 591, and support the future of library workers here in Maryland.

Ryan Dize  
Circ Assistant  
AACPL

**SB591\_Ryan\_Morris\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Ryan Morris**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Ryan Morris and I am a Part Time Hourly Information staff member at the Severn Branch of Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I grew up in AACPL libraries, and as a law student now, I utilize the libraries as a safe place to learn, study, and focus. Working for AACPL has been an incredible experience, but it has also opened my eyes to the threats that our libraries are facing. As a part time worker, I rely on this job to keep me afloat during my studies, but without benefits or leave, I am often left making difficult decisions about my future.

Additionally, part time workers are often left out of conversations when talking about employee needs in the workplace. We have a serious lack of benefits and that puts a huge strain on us. We want to be a part of the conversation when decisions are being made about workers welfare, since we are critical to the welfare of these library systems. Most of all, we just want to be treated fairly and equally to the coworkers we work alongside.

I want to be able to recommend the Library as a great place to work to my friends and family. I want to be able to tell them that it isn't just a great place to study, it's a great place to work too. I want, more than anything, for the libraries to remain available to everyone, and accessible for them too. None of this is possible without a staff that feels respected, heard, and validated. And none of that is possible without collective bargaining. Please support the Library Workers Empowerment Act, SB 591, and give library workers what they need to keep our doors open.

Ryan Morris  
PTH Information  
AACPL

**SB591\_Sabrina\_Razvi\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Sabrina Razvi**  
**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 Sabrina Razvi, and I am a Library Associate at the Severn Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library System. I have many hopes for the future of our libraries. My hope is that collective bargaining will allow for a fair process to negotiate over our wages, hours, and working conditions. This will support our financial security and our ability to continue living in the county that I help make a home for hundreds of patrons a week.

Better working conditions will help support my emotional well-being and allow me to perform better at work with less work related stress. As frontline workers, we face a variety of challenges that weigh on us day in and day out. With no right to collectively bargain, we bear these challenges silently, without the support we need to succeed.

With fewer opportunities to move up in our field without a masters degree in library science, those who cannot afford more schooling end up looking for library positions in other counties that have higher pay for their current position, or these workers end up leaving the field altogether. It is incredibly disheartening to see talented, caring coworkers leave our library system because of these circumstances. We are often short staffed during peak hours and left in a high stress environment where we do not have adequate time to serve all customers efficiently. Our Building Care Technicians are also expected to take on risky maintenance procedures that they have not been trained for. I know we can do better, but we need the accountability and protected voice at work that only come through collective bargaining.

I ask you to support this legislation to keep library workers working here in Anne Arundel County, and in Maryland as a whole. We want to advocate for ourselves at the table, but first we need you to advocate for us in the capital. Please support SB 591. Thank you.

Sabrina Razvi  
Library Associate  
AACPL

**SB591\_Tracy\_Lee\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda He

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Tracy Lee**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Tracy Lee, and I am a Library Associate II at the Eastport Annapolis Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system.

I came to the library later in my life, and my work experience wasn't taken into consideration when I was offered the job at the starting salary, with not a lot of room to negotiate. I wish that my experiences could have impacted my starting salary, since all future adjustments have been based on that. We have no set policies for how these things are determined at the moment. Being treated in a way that is comparable to others in my position would allow me to save more for retirement and give me the security I need for myself and my family.

Though we are often encouraged to voice our opinions, those opinions are rarely taken into consideration in any serious way. Whether it is small things, like an unplowed parking lot, or large things, like the unfair treatment of our part-time hourly (PTH) staff, we go unheard. PTH issues affect everyone at the branch- part time hourly employees are our backbone and we need them to manage the desk while full time and part time staff do all the various tasks we do inside and outside our library. We wouldn't be able to operate our libraries without them, and they deserve a protected voice at work and a seat at the bargaining table.

If this legislation passes, and we are given the right to collectively bargain, we would have a voice in our workplace and meaningful accountability. We would have a seat at the table, and administration would have to take our ideas into consideration and negotiate with us over policies. We want a voice. We want a process. But first, we want SB 591 to pass. Thank you for your time.

Tracy Lee  
Library Associate II  
AACPL

# **SB591 House Testimony 2024A.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Michael

Position: FAV

**Testimony of Morgan Michael**  
**Library Associate II - Adult Services, Bel Air Branch**  
**Harford County Public Library**  
**Before the Senate Finance Committee**  
**February 28, 2024**  
**SB 591 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining**  
**(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

My name is Morgan Michael, and I've been a Library Associate II in Harford County Public Library for almost seventeen years.

For three years we've worked with IAM to get a bill passed, enabling public library workers across the state to access their constitutional right to form a union. While I am drained and heartbroken, my passion for libraries and the service work we provide has not faded. The spirit of libraries resides in the workers -highly educated professionals who are often mistaken for volunteers. We need to be our own voice, to have the ability to advocate and fight for changes within the systems that are choosing to neglect us. We're underpaid and underappreciated, while the need for our services expands and increases throughout communities across the country.

Channels of communication to the administration and Board of Trustees in my system may appear open, but they are convoluted and often only a mirage. We're left uninformed about changes, confused about policies that change on a whim, and overworked thanks to staffing shortages. Morale is at an all time low. Based on the number of public library system workers ready to hold union elections, it's clear Harford County's is not the only system with issues that need resolving.

I'm asking for the passage of SB 591, because without it, library workers across the state will continue to experience enormous disrespect from their employers.

The libraries of our future depend upon the workers in them right now. Without this bill, we are hopeless for change. Thank you for your time and your support of this bill.

**SB 591\_Cynthia\_Jacobs\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Cynthia Jacobs**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Cynthia Jacobs, and I am a Building Care Technician at the Linthicum Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I am nervous for the security of my job and for the future of it as a sustainable position. With more outside contractors coming in, and no way to voice my feelings in any meaningful way, I fear that what was once a way to make a living in Anne Arundel County will be reduced to merely a part-time position that cannot sustain a person here.

I fear that If I was to speak up, to make it known that we as BCTs face unique threats and challenges that require unique solutions, at best I would not be heard. At worst, I fear that it would make me look ungrateful in the eyes of administration and management. I don't want to spend my time at work worrying about possible retaliation, and unable to raise or address the issues I see impacting myself, my coworkers, and the public. I want to continue to serve the libraries, but I want to do it in a way that I feel heard, respected, and encouraged. I want to do it with collective bargaining rights. Please pass SB 591, and give those rights not only to me, at AACPL, but to all library workers across the state. We serve a critical need, for all types of people. Now we need our critical needs met as well.

Cynthia Jacobs  
Building Care Technician  
Anne Arundel County Public Library System

**SB 591\_Evangelina\_Hakes\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Testimony of Evangelina Hakes**  
**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 Evangelina Hakes, and I am a Library Associate at the Mountain Road branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library System. We are facing a number of challenges here in AACPL. I currently comfortably live on my wages, but it's because I live at home with my parents. I know that in the current housing market, I would probably be in a much more precarious position if I did not. I know coworkers that make more than me and still have to do things like work extra hours on Sunday if certain financial burdens come up. We do essential work in our communities, and none of us should feel like we're living paycheck to paycheck, or only able to survive by living with family.

I like my branch, and we are lucky to have good leadership. But that leadership can always change, and the good leadership we have is often limited in what it can advocate for at an institutional level. There is the sense that the decisions being made by executive leadership aren't always informed by branch level experience, and that there are decisions being made that don't consider how policies and procedures have to be carried out. As for training, overall, there is a sense that there is not a solid, consistent approach to training for different positions which can make it harder to know what you need to know and feel supported in your role.

When it comes to decisions that are going to impact staff on a branch level, our voices as branch staff need to be heard and respected, and need to be included as part of decisions that will impact our work, our services, and our patrons. Many of our issues come from feeling like there is a disconnect between who's making decisions and who has to carry them out- decisions about library services and policies should be informed by those on the ground. I think collective bargaining is the best way to accomplish this. By giving us a direct path to negotiate with management, we'll be able to weigh in on these critical decisions that impact both us as staff and the communities and patrons we serve every day. This bill is critical to the future of our system, and to the future of libraries in the state of Maryland as a whole as well. We are relying on you, so that our communities can continue to rely on us. Please support SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act.

Evangelina Hakes  
Library Associate  
Anne Arundel County Public Library

**SB 591\_Jill\_Rodenburg\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Jill Rodenburg**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Jill Rodenburg, and I am a Library Associate II at the Mountain Road branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I have been full time for the last ten years, and though I have worked twelve total, my full time years are the only ones that are counted. Preparing for retirement has proven difficult, both as the cost of living has soared and as my salary has been unable to keep up.

Speaking from a smaller branch perspective, we have many of the same programming requirements as a larger branch but have to do it with a smaller staff. That means overworked employees and leaves less time for training, Continuing Education Units, and other job tasks. At our smaller branches, many jobs need to be done by staff with lower job titles. This sort of misclassification means there is a lack of clarity, but also a lack of fairness when it comes to how our jobs are treated.

I was the Staff Association Chair during the pandemic. We tried to address many issues and sometimes were successful, but often we had to fight hard to get management to listen. We told them there is a communication gap between employees and management. It's hard to build trust in a situation like that. Instead, good faith collective bargaining would give us the power to approach each other honestly and fairly. This is what SB 591 can accomplish, what you all can accomplish, if you pass this bill. Thank you for your time.

Jill Rodenburg  
Library Associate II  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Joseph\_Doyle\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Joseph Doyle**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Joseph Doyle, and I am a Library Associate at the Severn Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library System.

The difference between a workplace where I am allowed to bargain for my wages, working hours, and benefits, and one where I am not, is hard to measure. For one, through collective bargaining over our wages, I may be able to actually rent housing in the area where I work and be a part of the community I serve. I could save more appropriately for the future. I would be able to be a more autonomous member of society.

Many people come into this profession with the idea of helping others and serving their communities, which are wonderful reasons to get into any profession. However, given the lack of input on choices made across the system, and lack of support, many folks are burnt out and leave to look for better-paying and less stressful workplaces. This is especially detrimental as our system strives for more diversity. These issues serve only to push the folks we need to keep in our branches out of the profession entirely.

If we could collectively bargain, we could be partners in the process of maintaining and securing the future of our libraries. We would have codified structures through which we could say our piece about our needs and wants to management. We would have the backing and power of our coworkers to strengthen our requests. We would be seen and recognized with the respect that we as workers deserve. I urge you to support this legislation and allow us to meet our administrations at the bargaining table. We want libraries that work, and libraries that we are proud to work in. Together, we can make it happen. Please support SB 591.

Joseph Doyle  
Library Associate  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Karen\_Isaac\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Karen Isaac**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Karen Isaac, and I am a Circulation Assistant at the Eastport Annapolis Branch of Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I have worked in AACPL for nearly forty years. I have seen administrations come and go, policies change and shift, and needs grow. The changes that have come to the libraries over the last few decades demand a shift. We need fair treatment, equitable rights, and a fair process to address our grievances. These things can be accomplished through collective bargaining, a right that can be granted by passing SB 591.

My hope would be that through collective bargaining, we could let administrations across the state know that our libraries are under threat. That they need a strong staff to protect them, and that a strong staff can only be built when they have a strong buy-in to the place they work. Nothing can better accomplish this than collective bargaining. We are ready to partner with our administrations to build a resilient system. We are ready to bargain. Please pass SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, to allow us to start. Thank you.

Karen Isaac  
Circulation Assistant  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Kristy\_Gordon\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Kristy Gordon**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Kristy Gordon, and I am a Children's Instructor & Research Specialist with Howard County Library System, where I have worked for the past 23 years. Children's instructors receive the same treatment as adult instructors, but the workload is not always equitable. Children's staff present far more classes in the branch and are required to do more outreach in the community. Our children's department at Glenwood has unique areas that require additional upkeep that other branches do not. Retention in these critical positions is low.

In my 12 years at Glenwood, we have lost three young adult specialists, three children's supervisors, four children's instructors, one branch manager, three assistant branch managers, two adult instructors, one customer service supervisor and countless customer service specialists. That's an average turnover of about 1.5 people a year. Workplace decisions are made top-down. New administrators are not given the training and resources necessary for understanding how the branches run day-to-day. Decisions are made that staff cannot accommodate due to work hours, location in the county, outstanding responsibilities, or classes.

Collective bargaining will hopefully give us the ability to turn things around. We're grateful to have collective bargaining rights for library workers here in Howard County, and I firmly believe it is right that all library workers across the state of Maryland have collective bargaining rights as well. Please pass SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, and grant us a unified process that will allow us to bargain.

Kristy Gordon  
Children's Instructor and Research Specialist  
HCLS

**SB 591\_Laura\_Kellman\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Laura Kellman**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Laura Kellman, and I am a Library Associate with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I work at the Severna Park branch, and am now in my tenth year. I want to form a union with my coworkers so that I can have breathing room. I want to have the security of knowing that if changes come, I have a voice in what they are and how they are implemented. I want to know that my ability to retire is secure, that my time and position are valued, and that I am respected as an integral part of the library system that I love so much.

Sadly, right now we do not have as much breathing room as we need. As the cost of living in Maryland soars, it is becoming more difficult to convince staff that they can hold their breath for another year and stay working for our library system. Even worse, it is becoming difficult to convince new hires to hold their breath at all, and for them to envision a career and a future for themselves here at AACPL. We are losing institutional knowledge at an unfortunate rate, and as we struggle to find folks to fill the new positions, it makes it even harder on the folks that choose to remain.

But with collective bargaining, we would have a voice. We would not have to hold our breath any longer, because we could speak to our administrations directly and strongly about what resources we need to succeed in our jobs. I urge you to vote favorable on the Library Workers Empowerment Act, SB 591, and give us the breathing room we so desperately need.

Laura Kellman  
Library Associate  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Lyndon\_Snowden\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Lyndon Snowden**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Lyndon Snowden, and I am a Building Care Technician at the Eastport Annapolis branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system. As a building care tech, I ensure that the grounds and facilities of my branch are safe and functional. I keep things clean, beautiful, and accessible for the patrons that think of their library as a second home.

It is important for us to have a voice in our libraries because our libraries are relied upon by many people for their services. But for me, our library is even more vital- it's what I rely on for a living. As the cost of living has risen, it has become more difficult to stay in the place that I have called home, Maryland. I have a job to do, and I know that. So each day I get up and make sure that the branch is ready for the people that need it. But I want to have a way to make sure that the system is also ready for me. I want to be able to advocate on my own behalf, as well as on behalf of our patrons. I am asking you to pass this bill, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, SB 591, and to empower us with a voice at the table. We all want our libraries to stay open and safe, and we need this bill to make that happen.

Lyndon Snowden  
Building Care Technician  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Mackenzie\_Naveran\_AFSCME\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Mackenzie Naveran**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Mackenzie Naveran, and I work in Digital Experience at the Headquarters of the Anne Arundel County Public Library System. I am a part-time hourly employee, part of the hundreds that keep the system operating. Yet my job requirements are often higher than the hours I am allowed to work. This causes me enormous stress, not only for myself, but for the system, which needs my job to continue to function digitally. Though now I can make suggestions, those suggestions have not been enough. Collective bargaining is the answer.

Having the ability to have an open conversation with my supervisors would allow me to prove why my job requires more hours and deserves fair benefits. We have two incomes in my household and our monthly rent is on the lower side of what's available for this area, and still, we're just barely making it. With my additional health issues, having benefits could help alleviate some of the financial and emotional stress of having to afford treatment.

Libraries are the backbone to the public. We don't only offer books and information, we provide services for free that our community greatly needs; impoverished and wealthy alike. Our ability to be involved in decision making and policies is vital to improve the library systems because we're at the front lines seeing what's necessary. With collective bargaining rights, we'll have the ability to step in and negotiate over the decisions that are best for us and ultimately, best for the community. Please pass SB 591, and give me the ability to advocate on behalf of my system, on behalf of myself, and on behalf of Anne Arundel County.

Mackenzie Naveran  
Digital Experience  
AACPL

**SB 591\_Nancy\_Taubert\_AFSCME\_HB609.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patrick Moran

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony of Nancy Taubert**  
**SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act**  
**February 29th, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

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

My name is Nancy Taubert and I am a Building Care Technician for the Broadneck branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. As a Building Care Tech, my job description often only captures a small percentage of the actual work that I do. As a result, I am often tasked with doing things that do not have proper precautions, proper preparation, or adequate training. Without these things, my job is often more dangerous than it should be. Whether it is exposure to the elements, dangerous heights, or unsanitary conditions, I want to be able to resolve these issues directly, alongside the other BCTs that face the same challenges I do. The only way we can do that is through collective bargaining.

We can bargain for the health and safety language we need, ensuring that our working conditions are suitable and appropriate. More than that, we can bring to the table the threats that our branches are facing. We can say, not individually, but as one body, that we need better resources, and more targeted solutions, to these threats. Right now, we are scattered across branches, all over the county. But at the table, we can sit side by side. We can do this if you pass this legislation. Please support SB 591, and give us the power to speak for ourselves and for our libraries.

Nancy Taubert  
BCT  
AACPL

**240228\_SB591\_Education - Public Libraries - Collec**

Uploaded by: Sarah Roth

Position: FAV



February 28, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier  
Vice Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Vice Chair Klausmeier,

I would like to express my full support for *Senate Bill 591 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)*.

Unions are the backbone of the American workforce. Studies have shown that the unionization of a workforce directly leads to higher wages, decreased income inequality, smaller wage gaps, and a more diverse workforce. Additionally, the benefits that workers derive from their union membership lead to a healthier community as those benefits, like health insurance, are typically better quality and more accessible to employees whose workplace has an established union. Unions are able to fight for better conditions because of their power in numbers, and every worker in this country deserves the chance to bargain as a collective unit.

The Library Workers Empowerment Act will expand the right to collective bargaining to certain library employees who have not had this right in the past. Every union, whether they are made up of firefighters, State employees, or university employees, deserves the right to wield their collective weight when negotiating for better working conditions, and it is time for librarians and other library staff to enjoy these same rights.

I strongly urge this committee to give *Senate Bill 591 - Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)* the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone".

David Trone  
Member of Congress

**IAM.Support.SB591.0228.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tyrone Richardson

Position: FAV

**International  
Association of  
Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687

Area Code 301-967-4500

February 27, 2024

Senator Pamela Beidle  
Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Support – HB609/SB591 – Library Workers Empowerment Act**

Dear Chairwoman Beidle:

On behalf of the 600,000 active and retired members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), **I write today in strong support of HB609/ SB591 Library Workers Empowerment Act.**

This legislation, which has bipartisan support, would simply offer a fair and consistent process for the thousands of unorganized public library workers in Maryland to utilize their right to form a union and collectively bargain if they wish. This does not guarantee library workers will form a union, but creates a law for these workers to exercise their constitutional right of freedom of association.

As you know, the state does not have a legal pathway for all public library workers to form a union. In the past, this this matter has been decided on a county-by-county basis, requiring the state legislature to repeatedly contemplate similar legislation. This process of county-by-county is both ineffective and inefficient. The time is now for a statewide approach for these public servants who want a voice in the workplace and a seat at the table in the decision-making process.

Public library workers should not be prohibited from pursuing collective bargaining rights simply because they work in a jurisdiction in which legislation has not passed.

The IAM, which is based in Upper Marlboro, MD, champions workers' rights, giving them a voice in the workplace and involvement in the decision-making process. We proudly represent over 400 employees of the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) System.

Passing the Library Workers Empowerment Act ensures a path forward for unorganized public library workers to exercise these Constitutionally-protected rights.

**IAM fully supports HB609/SB591 – Library Workers Empowerment Act.**

Sincerely,

Hasan Solomon  
IAM National Political and Legislative Director

# **Letter in support of amendments to SB0591\_C Willso**

Uploaded by: Carrie Willson

Position: FWA

Carrie Willson, Executive Director • [cwillson@calvertlibrary.info](mailto:cwillson@calvertlibrary.info)  
850 Costley Way • Prince Frederick, MD 20678 • 410-535-0291 • 301-855-1862

Senator Pamela Beidle  
Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 29, 2024

**RE: Senate Bill 0591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Committee,

Maryland has for decades been considered Library Heaven. We are very proud of our well-used and well-respected libraries. Maryland library employees are some of the best in the country. With very few exceptions, each and every person who works in a library, from the director to the custodial staff, is there because they want to serve their community and provide access to the world of ideas, to safe, welcoming spaces and to connection with their community. I fully support the ability of library workers to collectively bargain and this discussion cannot and should not be about separating library workers from administrators from boards of trustees. First and foremost, we are working together as a team to serve our residents.

As you consider **Senate Bill 591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**, I respectfully request that you consider several amendments in addition to the ones that have already been accepted by the bill sponsors.

Howard County and Enoch Pratt Free Library are already underway with collective bargaining processes and have legislation that enables that process. Their employees, administration and Board of Library Trustees have been working in good faith with one another according to that existing legislation. *Both systems should be exempt from this bill under the same conditions as Prince George's, Montgomery and Baltimore County* (page 4 lines 3-5).

Sec. 23-907(A)(2)(IV) on page 7 includes provision for 18 month old cards to counted in the 30% for employees petitioning for a union election. However, decertification on page 12, Sec. 23-907(J)(2), says that cards can be no older than 6 months. Regardless of what the Public Employee Relations Act states, this does not seem logical or reasonable. Both timeframes should be the same at 6 months.

If this bill is truly designed to empower workers, the most important amendment needed is to strike lines 33-38 on page 8 and lines 1-5 on page 9 to ensure that library workers are able to exercise their democratic rights by engaging in a vote. [Sec. 23-907(D)(3)] This section of the



bill states that if 50% of the eligible members of a bargaining unit sign a card, that a union has been formed. *Allow workers to engage in a vote with 30% of the eligible signatures.*

I appreciate the amendment of revising “governing body” to “governing body of the applicable county.” *There is still ample opportunity for confusion about roles and responsibilities within the bill that would benefit from additional attention.* No distinction is made between the roles of the Director and of the Board of Library Trustees; they are referred to as “the Employer” as if they are one entity. Sec. 23-908(A) This seriously muddies the existing education code with respect to public libraries which endeavors to delineate what Boards are responsible for and what duties are the responsibility of the Library Director. Library Boards are responsible for policy and governance, in most systems they would be approving the collective bargaining agreement. The Director and administrative staff would be the party negotiating that agreement. Leaving this vagueness in the bill is counterproductive and will shift responsibility for clarity to the Attorney General who has had to weigh in on other sections of code relating to public libraries when roles were not defined.

Most of the timing detailed in the bill does not match the budget cycles of local jurisdictions. See Sec. 909(A)(1) and Sec. 23-909(D)(10). Bargaining units negotiating for changes to salary would likely be informed by their colleagues in library administration of the actual deadlines to put requests before their local funding bodies. As written, this bill would lead to frustration and wasted time for all parties involved. *Recommend referring to local budget schedules in a general manner as each jurisdiction across the state has a different process and different timing.*

Finally, I request that Sec. 23-912(B) (lines 9-11 on page 22) *be struck from the bill.* This sentence has the potential to subvert existing state law which gives Boards of Library Trustees the right to establish personnel policies for their library systems.

I urge your support of amendments to SB0591 to ensure that this bill is supportive of our state’s well respected public library systems, highly trained and talented library workers, dedicated library boards and our primary funding bodies, local government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Willson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Carrie Willson  
Executive Director, Calvert Library



# **SenateBill0591\_ExemptionRequest.pdf**

Uploaded by: Darcell Graham

Position: FWA



ENOCH PRATT  
*free* LIBRARY

*Office of the CEO*

Senator Pamela Beidle  
Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 29, 2024

**RE: Senate Bill 0591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining  
Request: Favorable with Necessary Amendments**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Committee,

The Enoch Pratt Free Library supports the right of all library workers statewide to enter into collective bargaining agreements. We support SB591 in that it will guarantee that right. Additionally we request one crucial amendment.

**I respectfully request an amendment to Senate Bill 591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act):**

We request that the Enoch Pratt Free Library be exempt from this bill.

We have been involved in good-faith bargaining for nearly a year and are coming closer to an agreement. However, we cannot project if we will have our contract finalized by 7/1/2024. Please allow us to continue our negotiations that are well underway. We would like to finalize our contract as soon as possible in order to prevent continued use of public dollars to support the process, and so we can begin our work under the contract that our Union, the employees, management and the Boards agree will work the best for us. Prolonging the process is detrimental to all parties.

I also ask that this same amendment be approved for the Howard County Library System, which is also in the midst of negotiations.

I urge your support of this proposed amendment to SB0591 to ensure that this bill is supportive of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and all the highly esteemed libraries and dedicated library workers in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Heidi Daniel  
President & CEO  
Enoch Pratt Free Library

# **Senate Finance Committee- final testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Skip Auld

Position: FWA



**Senate Finance Committee  
SB 591, Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining  
(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**February 29, 2024 – Favorable with Amendments**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of SB 591, the Library Workers Empowerment Act, **only with amendments**. I heartily support and have previously publicly supported the right of library employees to form unions if they so desire. Overall, this bill will accomplish that objective. However, I am highly concerned with two sections of the bill:

**#1**

Section 23–907. (D) (3) on Page 8, line 33 through Page 9, line 5, pasted here for your reference:

33 (3) IF THE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION SUBMITS A SHOWING OF  
34 INTEREST OF AT LEAST 50% OF THE EMPLOYEES IN AN UNREPRESENTED  
35 BARGAINING UNIT:  
1 (I) THE NEUTRAL DECISION MAKER SHALL ISSUE TO EACH  
2 PARTICIPANT IN AN ELECTION A CERTIFICATION OF REPRESENTATION; AND  
3 (II) THE EMPLOYER SHALL RECOGNIZE THE EMPLOYEE  
4 ORGANIZATION AS THE CERTIFIED BARGAINING REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
5 EMPLOYEES AT ISSUE.

This section precludes the ability of employees to participate in an election by secret ballot as detailed in section 23–907. (F) (1). **I find this to be highly anti-democratic, and therefore I respectfully request an amendment to delete section 23–907. (D) (3).**

**#2**

Section 23–912. (B) (3) on Page 8, line 9 through 11, Page 22, pasted here for your reference:

9 (B) SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING  
10 AGREEMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RESPECTIVE COUNTY CHARTER AND  
11 OTHER APPLICABLE LAWS, THE EMPLOYER MAY:

This insertion into the bill would eviscerate the ability of employers to manage their libraries. It is antithetical to the entire purpose of this section of the bill.

**If these two amendments cannot be incorporated into the bill, I would wholeheartedly oppose passage of the bill by the Senate. I cannot state my objection more emphatically.**

I understand that the bill sponsor, Senator Lam, is also working with the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) to consider other amendments. As a member of MAPLA, I support those amendments as well.

Thank you very much for consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Skip Auld". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Skip Auld, Chief Executive Officer, Anne Arundel County Public Library

**SB0591 Howard\_2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tonya Aikens

Position: FWA



**Testimony in support of SB0591: Education—Public Libraries—Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**  
**Hearing before the Finance Committee**  
**February 28, 2024**  
**Submitted by Tonya Aikens, Howard County Library System President & CEO**

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

I am writing to express support, *with amendments*, for **SB0591: Education—Public Libraries—Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**, which would allow public library staff to join collective bargaining units.

Howard County has had enabling legislation since 2013, and our staff recently elected (through a secret ballot election) to be represented by AFSCME. While the current law works well for our system, we can support SB0591 *with the following substantive amendments*:

- **Page 1, lines 16-21:** Delete the section to repeal Howard County's existing legislation. Both Howard County and AFSCME are operating under the provisions of this bill without issue.
- **Page 3, line 6:** Change "governing" body to "funding" body to accurately define the role of libraries' Board of Trustees (defining a term referencing County government). As stated in Education Article 23.401, "Each county public library system shall be governed by a board of trustees." Only one library system in Maryland is a county agency; the rest are *governed* by a board of trustees and are *funded* by their county government.
- **Page 4, lines 1-5:** Exempt Howard County and Pratt Library, or delay their inclusion in the bill until FY26, since they are waiting or currently in the process of negotiating agreements. Including them in the current bill would be a waste of the public dollars that have been invested in the process thus far. It is not fair to the employees, library systems, and Boards who have been engaged in the process in good faith.
- **Page 7, lines 8 and 27:** Change 18 months to 6 months, in order to maximize the number of eligible staff (referring to how old signature cards can be) and to be consistent with the six months requirement for decertification of a union.
- **Page 8, lines 2 and 13:** Change 2 calendar days to 2 business days and 1 calendar day to 2 business days to follow standard business practices of business vs calendar days (referring to days it takes to give a list of employees who are eligible to be in the bargaining unit to the neutral decision maker).
- **Page 8, lines 33 -35 and page 9 lines 1-5:** These sections state that if an organizer gets 50 percent of the signatures of employees, then no vote is necessary and a union is formed. Amend to 30 percent of signatures triggers an election in every case. *Voting in elections by secret ballot at every level is a hallmark of our democracy, and we should not circumvent that process.*
- **Page 10, lines 14-15:** Amend to include the Organization. Both parties should have the right to request a preferred method of voting.
- **Page 10, lines 17-18:** Amend to include the Organization. Both parties' proposals, to decide the method of voting, should be considered by the neutral decision maker.

- **Page 12, line 33:** State law exists (Education Article 23.406) that dictates the handling of personnel, appeals, grievances, and disciplinary action. Amend this line to include the Board of Library Trustees, State Library Board, and arbitration, if needed.
- **Page 18, line 20:** Change 5 calendar days to 14 business days to give adequate response time to convene a Board of Trustees meeting and allow adequate public notice for a public meeting (referring to days it would take to have the Trustees ratify decisions of a mediator that do not have a fiscal impact).

We have discussed these amendments with Senator Lam, the bill sponsor.

I urge your support of amendments to **Senate Bill 591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining (Library Workers Empowerment Act)**.

Thank you for your support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens,  
President & CEO



# **SB591 Education Public Libraries Unfavorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Barry Glassman

Position: UNF



Harford County  
Public Library

1221-A Brass Mill Road • Belcamp, Maryland 21017  
410.273.5600 • Balto.Metro 410.575.6761  
TDD: 410.838.3371 • FAX: 410.273.5606

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SB591 Education – Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining - UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share the concerns of The Harford County Library system and indicate our **opposition** to SB591. Although similar to prior introductions which have attempted to craft a one-size-fits-all collective bargaining framework for Maryland library systems regardless of number of employees or local governmental framework, House Bill 609 creates an unrealistic timetable and expectations for employees of a local library system. SB591 circumvents the historical practice of allowing local legislative delegations to craft collective bargaining legislation designed for their unique local library system.

Maryland library systems are primarily funded by local appropriations and subject to adoption of the County's annual budget. Library employees **are not** county employees in the vast majority of library systems. SB591's proposed collective bargaining timetable for submission to the local governing body does not align with the majority of county budgeting timetables and confirms the local governing body has no mandate to fund an agreement after months of negotiations and administrative expense. For instance, in Harford County, the County Council **may only reduce** the Executive's proposed budget and increase the Education budget. The County Council does not have the authority to increase the library system budget.

While SB591 exempts some jurisdictions that already have enabling legislation, it includes Howard County Library System that has enabling legislation passed in 2013 that they wish to retain. SB591 fails to recognize that Maryland's local systems can range from less than 20 employees to over 500 and 75% have fewer than 250 employees. These smaller systems could potentially be saddled with increased administrative costs and reduced flexibility in personnel matters during the current fiscal projections that would have a detrimental impact on service to our communities.

The collective bargaining framework outlined in SB591 may be a good fit for some jurisdictions but the Harford County Board of Library Trustees and myself believe that this approach is not the best fit for the Harford County Public Library system.

Harford County Library appreciates your support of our libraries across Maryland, and we would respectfully request an UNFAVORABLE report for SB591.

Sincerely yours,

Mary L. Hastler, Chief Executive Officer