



March 4, 2025

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Taylor Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: FAVORABLE

**HB599 – State Personnel – BWI Airport Fire & Rescue Department
Collective Bargaining and Arbitration Processes**

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents more than 10,000 active and retired professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel who proudly serve the citizens of the State of Maryland.

On behalf of our members this written testimony is submitted in strong support of House Bill 599, which provides for collective bargaining with binding arbitration between the uniformed firefighters of the BWI Airport Fire & Rescue Department and the State of Maryland.

Collective bargaining is a critical tool for ensuring that firefighters have a meaningful voice in decisions affecting their wages, benefits, and working conditions. By granting these first responders the ability to negotiate fairly, House Bill 599 fosters a more stable and equitable work environment that enhances both firefighter well-being and public safety.

Binding arbitration plays a key role in this process by reducing the uncertainty that can arise when negotiations reach an impasse. Knowing that an impartial third party will make a final determination ensures a fair resolution, encouraging both parties to engage in good-faith negotiations. This system strengthens trust in the bargaining process and empowers firefighter representatives to advocate effectively on behalf of their members.

Moreover, binding arbitration benefits not just firefighters but also the State of Maryland. It prevents unnecessary disputes from escalating, reducing workplace instability, maintaining employee morale, and safeguarding the state from potential reputational harm. By establishing a structured, legally sound mechanism for resolving conflicts, House Bill 599 promotes labor peace and a more effective public safety workforce.

Submitted respectfully,



Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 25 IAFF local affiliates from the following jurisdictions:

Federal: Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Fort George G. Meade, National Capital Federal Fire Fighters

State: Baltimore / Washington International Airport

Local: Annapolis City, Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland City, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, Talbot County, Worcester County