

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
HB 159
Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2025
February 4, 2025
SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. My name is Marilyn Miller and I am a state retiree who worked for at the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Division of Parole and Probation. I am also the President of Maryland Classified Employees Association, Inc. and we represent 2 Universities, 2 police departments, and 2 counties. On behalf of these workers, we call for a favorable report to HB 159, the bill that would ensure a fair bargaining process in contract negotiations between the Governor and its state workforce or the Universities and their staff.

What this bill would do is create an objective, rational process by which impasses during contract negotiations may be resolved. Additionally, offering the potential for either side to request an arbitrator whose decision regarding an impasse at bargaining will further advance and ensure that each side will be working in good faith to come to a resolution at the bargaining table. MCEA was negotiating two new contracts that have now taken us almost 2 years to agree on the bargaining agreement. If we had binding arbitration in effect, this never would have taken so long. MCEA would have benefitted by having a right to have the issue heard by a neutral arbitrator.

In Maryland, binding arbitration is already the norm for a large number of public sector employees. All local K12 public school systems in the state have the right to binding arbitration if contract negotiations come to an impasse, as do a number of municipal and county employee unions in their negotiations with management. Even a sector of state employees working within the State Department of Transportation have access to binding arbitration. And yet, the majority of state employees and employees at our local colleges and universities do not have these same rights. Let us correct this error and bring a level of objectivity and fairness to the collective bargaining system to the rest of state employees by passing HB 159.