



Testimony - HB 266, State Government - Public Employee Relations Act - Alterations
Favorable
House Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2025
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Honorable Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

SEIU Local 500, as one of Maryland's largest public sector unions representing over 23,000 workers, expresses our strong support for House Bill 266, which enhances the Public Employee Relations Act by improving labor relations and streamlining essential procedures for employee representation.

House Bill 266 makes necessary and practical updates to the collective bargaining process for public employees in Maryland. Specifically, it:

- Improves Union Representation Rights: By removing unnecessary restrictions on meeting formats, this bill ensures that exclusive representatives can effectively engage with new employees in person or virtually, improving accessibility and efficiency.
- Strengthens Employee Organization Protections: By clarifying that an employee organization retains the right to membership dues deductions until it is no longer the exclusive representative of a bargaining unit, the bill provides stability and continuity for workers.
- Enhances Board Operations: The bill modernizes the structure of the Public Employee Relations Board by allowing flexibility in the appointment of deputy directors, ensuring the Board can attract qualified legal professionals to oversee labor relations matters.

- Increases Efficiency in Labor Disputes: By refining procedures for investigating unfair labor practices and streamlining representation election processes, the bill ensures timely resolutions that benefit both employees and employers.

These provisions will create a more effective and equitable labor relations framework, empowering Maryland's public workforce while maintaining procedural fairness for all stakeholders.

I urge the committee to support HB 266 and move it forward with a favorable report to ensure that Maryland continues to foster fair and efficient labor relations for its dedicated public employees.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500