HB 266 - State Government - Public Employees Relations Act - Alterations
House Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2025

SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

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Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 266 if amended to leave in current language regarding dues. 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.

HB 266 modifies the Public Employees Relations Act by eliminating language pertaining to video conferencing and updating the personnel on the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) to allow for a total of three Deputy Directors, all required to be licensed attorneys to serve.

While we support the role of the PERB and some of the minor changes this bill makes, we are concerned about attaching dues deductions to exclusive representative status. The current law, which predates the State's recognition of these entities, allows state employees to support an employee organization through dues deduction, encouraging employees' free association and mutual support even without collective bargaining rights.

This law continues to help employees today, allowing employees without collective bargaining rights to support unions that represent them. The legislature should not strip away the employees ability to do this.

To address this, **we propose an amendment that strikes lines 12-14 on page 2** of the legislation, that states that dues deductions must cease when or if the employee organization is no longer an exclusive representative. This amendment ensures that employees still have the choice to support the employee organization of their choosing.