



1410 Bush Street (Suite A)
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-547-1515
Email: info@afscmemd.org

Patrick Moran – President

**SB576 – Labor and Employment – Mandatory Meetings on Religious or Political Matters –
Employee Attendance and Participation (Maryland Worker Freedom Act)
Finance Committee
February 19, 2025**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports Senate Bill 576. Senate Bill 576 prohibits employers from taking adverse employment action or threatening to take adverse employment action against an employee if the employee declines to attend or participate in an employer-sponsored meeting, during which an employer communicates their opinion on religious or political matters, including the decision to join or support a labor union. Additionally, an employer may not fail or refuse to hire a job applicant, due to the job applicant's refusal to participate in such meetings.

Prior research has shown that as much as 89% of all employers conduct captive audience meetings in response to unionization efforts.¹ Employers spend over \$400 million per year on “union-avoidance” firms and consultants that utilize captive audience meetings as a method to coerce and intimidate workers into opposing unionizing their workplace.² In response, twelve states have enacted laws to address and curb this practice, while five additional states are considering similar legislation.³

Enacting this legislation is essential to promote employees' freedom to choose whether they wish to have or not have a union in their workplace. Captive audience meetings held by an employer instill a climate of fear, intimidation, and coercion and inhibit employees from making choices freely. Maryland should pass this legislation and join numerous other states that are standing up to protect workers' freedoms in their workplaces.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB576.

¹ Daniel Perez and Jennifer Sherer, *NLRB rules anti-union captive audience meetings an illegal abuse of employer power: States must also continue to broaden protection of workers' freedom from employer coercion on political, religious matters*, Economic Policy Institute (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.epi.org/blog/nlrp-rules-anti-union-captive-audience-meetings-an-illegal-abuse-of-employer-power-states-must-also-continue-to-broaden-protection-of-workers-freedom-from-employer-coercion-on-political-rel/#:~:text=Last%20week%2C%20the%20National%20Labor,%2C%20employer%20opinions%20on%20unionization>).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*