
ROBERT G. CASSILLY
Harford County Executive



ROBERT S. McCORD
Director of Administration

February 26, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Opposition on SB976 – Collective Bargaining – Local Government Employees and Public Employees Relations Act

Dear Chairwoman Beidle and Committee Members,

Senate Bill 976 expands collective bargaining rights to public employees of local governments. Specifically, this legislation serves as an unfunded mandate for collective bargaining rights for local government employees statewide, imposes binding arbitration requirements, and significantly alters local government labor relations. As noted by others, this could force counties to divert resources from essential public services, undermining fiscal responsibility, operational flexibility, and local control.

Currently, counties manage labor relations through locally determined policies that reflect the unique needs of workforce and financial constraints. This legislation would require all counties to engage in collective bargaining under a one-size-fits-all state framework, overriding local decision-making.

This would essentially transfer critical budgetary and personnel decisions to third-party arbitrators who may be unfamiliar with local fiscal realities. The potential financial impact this could have on counties such as Harford would be substantial and unsustainable. Without dedicated State or federal funding, counties will be forced to absorb significant costs associated with labor negotiations, arbitration, and contract implementation. This unpredictability could easily force counties to either increase taxes or cut critical public services such as education and emergency response to accommodate costly agreements.

I respectfully request that the Finance Committee report unfavorably on SB976.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", is written over the typed name.

Robert G. Cassilly