

**Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
SB 284  
Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of 2026  
March 4, 2026  
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. AFT-Maryland is the state federation for a number of public K-12 education, public higher education, and public employee unions in our state, representing over 20,000 employees in the Baltimore Teachers Union, county and municipal government employees in multiple regions, the full-time faculty at eight of the state's community colleges, and four different state employees unions. On behalf of these workers, and especially the city and municipal workers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, as well as full-time faculty at these community colleges, we call for the committee to amend the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act to mitigate the large proposed reductions in state aid that could seriously hamper these institutions ability educate and provide services to our residents.

**Reject the Capping of Cade Funding for 15 of the State's Community Colleges**

The BRFA proposes capping state aid to the community colleges through the Cade funding formula to no more than an increase of 3% each year for the next 3 years. AFT-Maryland calls on the state to reject this cap for each of the next 3 years. Our community colleges have been seeing, on average, an increase in enrollment of approximately 5%. A number of schools—namely, Prince George's Community College and Frederick Community College— have seen even higher growth rates; yet, with the proposed cap on increased funding of state aid at only 3%, these colleges, and many others like Montgomery College, the Community College of Baltimore County, and Howard Community College, will not have the funds necessary to educate these larger enrollments. We ask our colleges to play vital roles in educating Maryland's future workforce through programs like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, as well as dozens of apprenticeship and career training programs. We know, through the institution of these programs, an educated, highly trained workforce will drive a sustainable economy for the state in both the near and long-term. Putting a cap on our funding puts a cap on these programs and puts a cap on the financial success of our state.

**Reject the Reduction in base formula funding for Baltimore City Community College**

THE BRFA proposes a reduction in state aid to Baltimore City Community College, moving from 68.5% to 67.5% of funds to selected 4-year public institutions. BCCC is not funded through the

Cade funding formula, and this provision of the BRFA reduces this funding to the college **in perpetuity** (whereas the proposed Cade reduction is only for 3 years). This could severely hamper the school's ability to deliver the education our residents deserve; the school has always stretched its budget thin to try to meet educational demands. There is nothing really at the school left to cut.

We must point out that Baltimore City Community College is a Community College that is not funded in statute the same way as the other colleges in the state, and does not have a funding model that shields it from reductions in state aid. Other community colleges in Maryland can turn to their local counties to help them offset any reductions in support from the state; BCCC does not have this luxury— this reduction must be either borne by the employees or the students of the school in the form of stagnant wages, larger class sizes, staff attrition, higher tuition, or reduced services.

### **Reductions in Payments to Civil Divisions of the State**

Finally, the BRFA proposes a reduction in disparity grants given to low-wealth jurisdictions who do not have enough local tax revenues to help them provide services to their residents. Coupled with the drastic reduction in state aid from shifting the retirement costs for educators to the counties, these shifts in costs will be especially devastating. Prince George's County, just by way of example, will see the largest reduction in state aid in this area; but these reductions will also stretch the budgets thin for other jurisdictions where our members work, forcing county and city employees to also do more with less. Prince George's County's reduction in the disparity grant— nearly triple the reduction of any other jurisdiction, coupled with the largest reduction by actual dollars in expected state aid to our community colleges— means that community colleges like PGCC will not be able to find other revenue sources to fulfill its educational obligations.

We again call this committee to reject these BRFA-proposed reductions in state aid to community colleges and local jurisdictions in the state. Thank you.