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**Senate Bill 643 – Natural Resources – Hunting – Management  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 10, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 represents 55,000 public sector workers across Maryland. These dedicated men and women keep our state running, from our state highways and hospitals to our correctional facilities and state and local agencies. Many of these members are not only state and local government employees but are also lifelong hunters and conservationists who rely on Maryland's natural resources for recreation, food security, and family traditions.

For the modern public sector employee, the "standard" work week is often a myth. Many of our members work non-traditional shifts, overtime, and weekend rotations. When they do have time off, it is frequently consumed by the essential demands of family life: youth sports, religious services, and household maintenance.

Under current law, the narrow window for Sunday hunting (30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30am) effectively excludes a significant portion of the working class. A parent who spends their Sunday morning at a child's soccer game or a community event is currently barred from the woods for the remainder of the day. SB 643 addresses this by reopening the window from 3:00pm until sunset. This added option is a common-sense modification that acknowledges the reality of a working person's schedule, ensuring that hunting isn't a luxury reserved only for those with flexible weekday calendars.

Maryland does not exist in a vacuum. Our neighboring states, including Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania have moved toward expanding Sunday hunting access to reflect modern lifestyle needs. Currently, Maryland's restrictive midday "gap" makes us an outlier in the region.

By passing SB 643, it encourages local participation and pushes recreational spending back within our state lines. Maryland can modernize its conservation management while ensuring our own workers can enjoy the sport in their home counties on the lower shore.

Hunting is more than a hobby for our members; it is a source of stress relief and a way to provide organic, sustainable food for their families. In an era where work-life balance is a priority recruitment and retention, providing expanded access to outdoor recreation is a low-cost, high-impact way to support the well-being of our state and local workforce.

For these reasons, AFSCME Council 3 urges a favorable report on SB 643.