



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Senate Bill 0417: Maryland Worker Freedom Act  
Sponsor: Senator Lam**

**Senate Finance Committee – February 18, 2026  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges a favorable report of SB0417, the Maryland Worker Freedom Act. This bill bans captive audience meetings, a tool employers use to intimidate workers ahead of union elections.

WDC supports this bill for two reasons:

- 1) Upholding democracy means upholding free and fair elections everywhere, whether those elections are for public office or for union representation.
- 2) We recognize unionization as a powerful tool for improving the lives of working women and their families.

Free and fair elections are the bedrock of any democratic system. When employers force their workers to attend anti-union meetings under penalty of discipline or discharge, they exercise undue influence. Union organizers do not have access to the same tools - they can never compel workers to attend a pro-union meeting. Under the current system, workers are much more likely to hear the case against unionization than the case for unionization. When workers' wages, benefits and workplace protections are at stake, they deserve a fair system that will allow them to make an informed choice.

A state like Maryland that values gender equity should be ensuring that women have a fair chance at joining unions. Unions are powerful tools working women have used to improve their pay and working conditions across the U.S. According to the [National Women's Law Center](#), women in unionized workplaces make 21% more than their non-union counterparts and they experience a smaller gender pay gap. Unionized women also have better access to paid family leave, health insurance, and retirement benefits.

**We ask for your support for SB0417.**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Dorothy Manevich  
WDC Advancing Democracy  
Subcommittee

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy Chair