



Testimony - SB 922, Collective Bargaining - Local Government Employees and Public  
Employee Relations Act  
Favorable  
Senate Finance Committee  
March 12, 2026  
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Honorable Chairwoman Beidle & Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

SEIU Local 500, which represents thousands of public sector and nonprofit workers across Maryland, including early childhood educators, school support staff, college faculty, and other public servants strongly supports Senate Bill 922.

SB 922 extends collective bargaining rights to public local employees across Maryland by applying the Maryland Public Employee Relations Act to counties, municipalities, and certain quasi-governmental entities. Quite simply, this bill ensures that the workers who keep our counties and municipalities running have the same fundamental freedom of association and collective bargaining rights already afforded to many other public employees in our state.

For too long, collective bargaining protections have depended on geography. A worker's rights should not be determined by their ZIP code. SB 922 creates a consistent statewide framework while still allowing local governments to adopt compliant local labor laws that meet or exceed state standards. That balance respects local governance while ensuring a meaningful floor of rights.

Importantly, the bill establishes clear impasse procedures, including binding arbitration where appropriate. That structure promotes stability, predictability, and labor peace. When workers have a fair path to resolve disputes, services continue uninterrupted and communities benefit.

SB 922 also modernizes the authority of the Public Employee Relations Board, strengthens enforcement of unfair labor practice protections, and ensures existing bargaining relationships remain intact during implementation. These provisions create clarity, transparency, and accountability for both employees and employers.

Collective bargaining is not just about contracts. It is about dignity, retention, and the ability of public servants to advocate for safe staffing, fair wages, and quality public services. When workers have a voice, workplaces are stronger, turnover is reduced, and taxpayers ultimately benefit from a more stable and professional workforce.

SEIU Local 500 believes every public worker deserves the right to organize and bargain collectively, regardless of whether they work for the State, a county, or a municipality. SB 922 moves Maryland closer to that principle of fairness and equity.

SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 922.

Thank you for your time and consideration.