



Testimony - HB 1492, Collective Bargaining - Public Employees - Revocation of  
Certification and School and Library Employees' Right to Strike  
Favorable

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

March 11, 2026

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Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and  
Elections Committee:

On behalf of the more than 20,000 working people represented by SEIU Local  
500—including educational support professionals in Montgomery County Public  
Schools—we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1492 and urge a  
favorable report.

The ability of workers to organize and advocate collectively for fair wages, safe working  
conditions, and dignity on the job is fundamental to a strong democracy and a strong  
public education system. HB 1492 strengthens these rights by ensuring that public  
school and library employees have meaningful tools to address workplace issues when  
negotiations reach an impasse.

Educational support professionals—including paraeducators, bus drivers, food service  
workers, custodians, and administrative staff—are essential to the success of  
Maryland's public schools. These workers keep our schools running every day and  
ensure students have safe, welcoming environments in which to learn. Yet historically,  
many of these workers have had limited leverage when negotiations stall or when  
employers fail to respond to legitimate concerns raised through the collective bargaining  
process.

HB 1492 helps restore balance by affirming that public school and library employees have the right to engage in a strike and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who exercise that right.

This protection ensures that workers cannot be permanently replaced, discriminated against, or locked out for participating in collective action. These safeguards are critical to protecting the integrity of collective bargaining.

Importantly, the bill does not eliminate negotiation or mediation processes. Maryland law already includes robust procedures—such as mediation and arbitration—to encourage good-faith bargaining. HB 1492 simply ensures that workers retain the same fundamental rights that many other workers rely on when those processes fail to produce fair outcomes.

For educational support professionals, the ability to stand together and advocate collectively is often the only way to address issues such as understaffing, unsafe working conditions, and wages that do not keep pace with the rising cost of living. When workers have real leverage in negotiations, it leads to stronger contracts, more stable school workforces, and ultimately better outcomes for students and communities.

Strong public schools depend on strong public workers. By protecting collective bargaining rights and ensuring that workers cannot be punished for standing together, HB 1492 moves Maryland closer to a more equitable and effective public education system.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1492.

Thank you for your time and consideration.