



TESTIMONY

HB0831 Collective Bargaining – Local Government Employees and Public Employee Relations Act

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Schindler

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0831 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists – individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

HB0831 establishes collective bargaining rights for local government employees and applies the Maryland Public Employee Relations Act to county and municipal employers. It also creates clear procedures for bargaining, including impasse resolution and binding arbitration.

The rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively with employers ensure that both workers and management come to the table as equals. This principle applies just as strongly to local government employees. When workers have the ability to organize, they can advocate for reasonable wages, safe working conditions, and fair treatment. Without these rights, employers—public or private—too often hold all the power.

HB0831 also addresses a long-standing inequity. Many local government employees perform essential public services but lack the same bargaining rights afforded to other public workers in Maryland. This bill corrects that imbalance and ensures that local employees are not left behind simply because of where they work.

Local governments, like any responsible employer, should not rely on sub-standard wages or poor working conditions to balance their budgets. Fair

labor practices strengthen the workforce, reduce turnover, and improve service delivery to residents.

HB0831 provides a clear, consistent framework for labor relations across Maryland's counties and municipalities. It promotes fairness, stability, and respect for the workers who keep our communities functioning every day.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0831.