



March 11, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
The Honorable Kenneth Kerr, Vice Chair
House Government, Labor, & Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director, Baltimore DC Metro Building Trades Council on
HB 1492: Collective Bargaining - Public Employees - Revocation of Certification and School and Library Employees'
Right to Strike
Position: FAVORABLE**

Thank you, Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB1492. I am Ray Baker, Maryland Director of the Baltimore-DC Building Trades Council (BDCBT). The BDCBT's 28 affiliates represent more than 30,000 union construction workers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The BDCBT stands in solidarity with our labor siblings on the right to strike. Currently, over 13 states allow public sector employees to strike including California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota. Notably on the list allowing public employees to strike are notoriously conservative states Louisiana and Wyoming. This demonstrates that Maryland is leading from behind, a position we cannot maintain if we are to be the state we purport ourselves to be.

While appearing disruptive, strikes are a useful tool for protecting public service and providing economic justice. As is, employers can delay implementation of critical decisions and make promises with no metric of accountability. This is unfair and uneven, undermining the mutual relationship between worker and employer.

There's a belief that strikes close schools or threaten young people with long term learning loss. While presumed, the facts simply don't support this. Teacher strikes in the US last for a median of two days and there is no evidence of long-term learning loss. Additionally, making strikes illegal does not necessarily prevent them. Of the recent wave of teacher strikes, nearly 75% of them were illegal.

Ultimately, the right to withhold their labor is the most effective tool workers have when employers are not engaging with good faith and providing the resources needed to perform one's job well. Maryland needs to be the leader in providing a fair and balanced playing field for employers and workers alike, including public workers. This legislation does that. It is for this reason the BDCBT urges a favorable report on HB1492.

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