



## MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

*Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO*

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### **SB 831 - Labor Law - Child Labor Penalties, Private Sector Employee Labor Relations, and State Employee Labor Standards**

**House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee**

**April 2, 2026**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 831. On behalf of 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 831 recognizes a pivotal moment in our country of escalating threats against labor. Long-standing worker protections, including child labor laws and the federal labor relations framework, are being challenged, weakened, or rolled back entirely. Maryland cannot afford to wait to see if federal protections remain intact. Workers in our state need a backstop, and this bill provides exactly that.

This legislation is proactive rather than reactive. Importantly, this bill is contingent upon the NLRA being repealed or narrowed, or the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) expressly ceding jurisdiction to the states. This ensures that Maryland only activates its state-level labor relations framework when federal protections have collapsed. Instead of leaving workers exposed to federal instability, SB 831 creates a responsible structure so that private-sector workers can organize, bargain collectively, and seek enforcement through the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) if the NLRB no longer acts. This ensures that Maryland's workers are not left behind in a moment of national uncertainty.

At the same time, SB 831 strengthens Maryland's child labor protections at a time when other states are moving in the opposite direction. When a child is placed in a hazardous environment, the consequences can be life-changing. Children deserve the strongest protections we can provide so their time is spent in school, with their families, and enjoying childhood, not in dangerous workplaces. Yet, across the country, states are rolling back protections and opening the door to more child labor violations. Maryland must be



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different. Strengthening penalties is how our state ensures that every child's safety and development come before an employer's economic goals.

SB 831 is a comprehensive and necessary response to a rapidly shifting national landscape. It strengthens child labor protections, reinforces state employee standards, and creates a state-level framework so that Maryland workers are not left unprotected if federal labor law vanishes. Instead of waiting for protections to be taken away, this bill ensures Maryland is prepared.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 831.