



Testimony - HB 86, State and Local Employees – Cancer Screening – Paid Leave  
Favorable

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

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Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

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

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of public service workers across Maryland who keep our communities running every day. These workers deserve workplace policies that promote health, dignity, and prevention—not policies that force them to choose between their paycheck and their health.

HB 86 takes an important and commonsense step by ensuring that public employees have access to up to four hours of paid leave per year for cancer screening. Early detection saves lives. Cancer screenings are among the most effective tools we have to identify serious illnesses before they become life-threatening or require far more costly treatment. Yet too many workers delay or skip screenings because they cannot afford to take unpaid time off or use limited personal leave.

For many of our members—particularly lower-wage workers, frontline employees, and part-time staff—losing even a few hours of pay can mean falling behind on rent, groceries, or childcare. HB 86 removes this barrier and recognizes that preventive care is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Importantly, this bill:

- Applies broadly to State, county, and municipal employees, including part-time and temporary workers;

- Provides a modest, clearly defined amount of leave that balances employee health needs with operational continuity; and
- Allows employers to establish reasonable procedures for requesting and approving leave.

This is a smart investment in a healthier workforce and a more efficient public sector. Supporting preventive care reduces long-term health costs, decreases absenteeism caused by advanced illness, and demonstrates that Maryland values the people who serve the public every day.

SEIU Local 500 urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 86 and help ensure that no public employee has to put off potentially life-saving cancer screenings because of work. Thank you to Delegate Vogel for leading on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs  
SEIU Local 500