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Washington County

Government, Labor, and  
Elections Committee

*Subcommittees*

Government Operations and Ethics  
Labor

Local Government/Bi-County Agencies  
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House Study Group on Economic Stability



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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB831- Collective Bargaining - Local Government Employees and Public Employee  
Relations Act**

**Government, Labor and Elections**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026: 1:00PM**

Good afternoon Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr and members of the committee,

For the record, I am Delegate Matthew J. Schindler, and I am pleased to present House Bill 831, Collective Bargaining – Local Government Employees and Public Employee Relations Act. Colleagues, this legislation extends collective bargaining rights to employees of county and municipal governments throughout our state. As many of you may be aware, some of our public employees in county and municipal government currently do have collective bargaining rights, but unfortunately, this right does not exist for all local government employees. This legislation does not mandate collective bargaining; it enables collective bargaining for all local government employees. The freedom to collectively bargain should rest with the employees to determine whether they wish to organize and collectively bargain. This freedom should not be at the discretion of an employer, whether they are a public sector employer or a private sector employer.

Additionally, subject to certain exceptions, this legislation applies to the Public Employee Relations Act to local governments. In 2023, the General Assembly made significant progress towards modernizing and streamlining our public sector collective bargaining laws by passing the Public Employee Relations Act. This legislation consolidated various public sector collective bargaining statutes for K-12, state, and higher education workers to streamline processes and procedures for labor relations. Additionally, the legislation consolidated three different public sector labor boards into one, the Public Employee Relations Board. This legislation continues the trend toward streamlining and modernizing our public sector labor relations, while also providing an additional Deputy Director position for the Public Employee Relations Board to account for their expanded jurisdiction. Local government jurisdictions that already have existing collective bargaining laws in place will have a one year period to seek certain exemptions from the act.

At its core, this bill is about fairness and consistency. Collective bargaining rights should be applied fairly. All municipal and county employees should be afforded the right to engage in collective bargaining efforts if they choose.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 831.