

**Favorable  
House Bill 831  
Collective Bargaining - Local Government Employees and Public Employee  
Relations Act**

**Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
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Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 831. This legislation would extend collective bargaining rights to all employees of local governments for the purpose of being represented by employee organizations in all matters relating to salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions. This bill streamlines public sector labor relations by enabling certification elections and unfair labor practices to be addressed by the Public Employee Relations Board, rather than a patchwork of different systems at the local government level.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

For far too long, many workers in Maryland's public sector have been unable to enjoy the freedom to collectively bargain through their unions. Maryland's development of public sector collective bargaining for workers has been piecemeal, incremental, and insufficient to meet the needs of working families, especially when compared to other states' public sector collective bargaining systems.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 831 makes

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Labor Boards, *Public Schools, Higher Education, State Employees*, slides 7-8 (2014) (noting the development of public sector collective bargaining for certain state employees and higher education employees developed from 1996 – 2012), retrieved from: <https://laborboards.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2014/05/Powerpoint-for-Shanghai-Delegation-Feb-2013.pdf>; See also, Jimmy Tarlau, *Many Workers in Md. Don't Have the Right to Form a Union. That Needs to Change*, Maryland Matters (May 20, 2021), <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/05/20/jimmy-tarlau-many-workers-in-md-dont-have-the-right-to-form-a-union-that-needs-to-change/>.



meaningful progress to correct this historical error, by extending collective bargaining rights to county and municipal employees, who currently do not have the freedom to collectively bargain.

Every worker, whether they are in the private sector or the public sector, deserves a seat at the table with their employer to discuss their working conditions. The dignity of labor requires that all workers be able to enjoy the fundamental right to collectively bargain with their fellow workers. There is no rational basis to continue to deny or delay collective bargaining rights for workers. We continue to urge lawmakers to enact policies that lift up the voices of workers and recognize the dignity of labor. This legislation is a vital step towards fairness and equity.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 831.**