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Patrick Moran – President

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**HB 1173 – State Procurement – Contractors and Vendors –  
Restrictions on Use of State Funds and Resources  
Government, Labor, and Elections  
March 6, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports House Bill 1173. State law currently provides that a unit of state government may not knowingly use public funds to influence the decisions of state employees to: i) support or oppose an employee organization that represents or seeks to represent the employees of the unit of State government; or ii) become a member of an employee organization.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 1173 applies these existing requirements to a contractor or vendor contracted by a unit of state government. Additionally, the legislation prohibits a contractor or vendor contracted by a unit of state government from knowingly using public funds or resources to contract with or provide assistance to any person for the purpose of: i) carrying out a campaign against efforts by employees of the contractor or vendor to gain or retain collective bargaining rights or certify an employee organization as exclusive representative; or ii) engaging in anti-union activities.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers across Maryland including city, county, state, and higher education. AFSCME members are on the frontlines everyday providing essential public services in communities across Maryland.

HB 1173 is critically needed to make certain employees of vendors or contractors who are doing business with the state of Maryland respect an employee's freedom to choose whether they wish to join a union. State funds and resources should not be supporting private contractors or vendors who are engaging in anti-union activity and attempting to interfere with employees' decision to unionize.

Unfortunately, AFSCME has recent experience with this exact type of conduct. Centurion, the vendor responsible for the provision of medical services in Maryland's correctional facilities, recently engaged in a variety of conduct at WCI and NBCI for the purpose of defeating their employees' attempts to unionize. Centurion sent texts, emails, held small group and one-on-one meetings, and large group meetings with employees all in an attempt to defeat their union. Fortunately, despite these attempts, employees at Centurion voted to join AFSCME Council 3. HB 1173 sends a strong message that Maryland values workers' freedom to organize and will not tolerate anti-union conduct by vendors or contractors.

**We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1173.**

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<sup>1</sup> MD Code, State Finance and Procurement, § 2-108(a).

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

My name is Nicole Jones, I'm a Registered Nurse with the medical vendor Centurion at Western Correctional Institution. I've worked as an RN and LPN for over 10 years, and my past experience includes working at NBCI, RCI, and the MCTC. I love what I do. People who are housed in our facilities deserve to be treated with respect and dignity and they deserve quality medical care

While I'm passionate about my work, it comes as no surprise that this job can be incredibly stressful. The workload on my co-workers and I is incredibly demanding. Often times, I'm texted by management in the early hours of the morning, notifying me of changes in my caseload for the day's shift. We are understaffed, and on weekend shifts, there is only one nurse for an entire compound, which means one nurse on duty for 1,000 incarcerated individuals.

Due to these working conditions, my coworkers and I decided to form our union with AFSCME. As we started forming our union, it became clear our employer was opposed to our union. My employer sent out mass text messages and emails discouraging us from organizing. Additionally, during my scheduled work shift, I was pulled into a room where an outside vendor hired by Centurion gave me a thirty-minute lecture on why I should not join a union. Again, this occurred during my work shift when I was trying to collect sick call passes, which are important to collect to identify potential medical needs from people in our facility. Centurion also flew in top executives and lawyers from the company and held group meetings with all of us employees to discourage us from unionizing. My coworkers and I were scared to speak out for fear of losing our jobs and for months we were filled with anxiety, wondering what would happen to us if our employer knew we supported our union.

Despite winning our union election over four months ago, Centurion's objections before the NLRB have prevented certification, and thus we have been unable to bargain and we do not have the safety and protection of union representation.

Please protect other workers in Maryland from going through what we went through with Centurion. I ask you to support HB 1173, thank you.

