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Patrick Moran – President

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**HB 86 – State and Local Employees – Cancer Screening – Paid Leave  
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
January 27, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 supports House Bill 86. Effective July 1, this bill would allow state, county, and municipal employees to use up to four hours of cancer screening leave in any 12-month period, subject to approval. We commend the intent of this legislation, to ensure that all public employees have access to leave for cancer screenings, even if they have exhausted their earned leave or are newly hired.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 proudly represents approximately 55,000 public service workers across city, county, state, K-12 and higher education sectors. Our members are on the front lines every day, delivering the critical public services that Maryland communities rely on.

We represent municipal employees in the City of Baltimore, where a similar cancer screening leave program already exists. There have been no reported issues with that program, demonstrating that this policy is both workable and beneficial.

Early detection is one of the most effective tools in preventing cancer-related deaths, and providing this leave is a meaningful benefit for employees. It should be noted that some cancer screenings, like a colonoscopy, may require longer than 4 hours to complete with prep and travel time factored in. At a time when public employers are competing to recruit and retain workers, benefits like this make a real difference. In addition, early detection may help reduce long-term costs for the health plan. If passed, we look forward to working with our employers to negotiate this leave program for our members.

HB 86 is a strong and sensible bill. We respectfully urge a favorable report.

The following states that have collective bargaining for state employees, AK, CA, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, ME, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NV, OH, OR, PA, MT, RI, WA have a terminal point for negotiations, either binding interest arbitration, the right to strike, or a legislative process. These processes create a level playing field for both parties.

This legislation would create a mutual incentive to compel parties to reach an agreement around collective bargaining negotiations by instilling a binding interest arbitration process, whereby if the two sides cannot come to agreement through negotiations by a specified deadline the proposals.

From the two sides would be presented to a professional, neutral third- party arbitrator – hearing from witnesses and experts, with data and evidence – for consideration of all the facts involved with the purpose of determining which proposal is most appropriate to implement. The choice by the arbitrator would then be considered a binding resolution to be implemented by the Governor and exclusive bargaining representative for whatever appropriations are necessary to implement and fund the memorandum of understanding. The budgetary powers of the Maryland General Assembly remain unaltered.

SB 188 is a strong and positive step toward enhancing fairness, balance, and efficiency, and resolution. It follows a model that is well-established in other states and among Maryland counties. We urge a favorable report.

