



Testimony - SB 136, Collective Bargaining - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis
Commission - Police Officers
Favorable
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
March 31, 2026
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 public workers across Maryland who provide essential services every day and who know firsthand that collective bargaining is one of the most effective tools workers have to ensure fairness, accountability, and dignity on the job. Senate Bill 136 advances that principle by extending collective bargaining rights to police officers of the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission—workers who currently lack the same protections afforded to many of their public-sector peers.

At its core, this bill is about labor solidarity. The right to organize and bargain collectively should not depend on job title, agency, or political convenience. When some public workers are excluded from these rights, it weakens standards for all workers and undermines the stability of the public workforce as a whole.

SEIU Local 500 believes strongly that every public worker deserves a voice in their working conditions, including wages, benefits, safety, scheduling, and disciplinary processes. Collective bargaining promotes transparency, reduces conflict, improves morale, and leads to more effective public service delivery. These benefits extend not only to workers, but also to the communities they serve.

SB 136 takes an important step toward closing gaps in Maryland's collective bargaining framework. While SEIU Local 500 continues to advocate for collective bargaining rights for all public workers who are still excluded under current law, we recognize this bill as meaningful progress in the right direction. No group of workers should be left behind.

Maryland has long positioned itself as a state that values working people. Upholding that commitment means ensuring that labor rights are applied consistently and equitably across the public sector. We believe you all should look to your colleagues to the south in Virginia who are advancing legislation enfranchising public sector collective bargaining rights for all. If Maryland wishes to stay economically competitive, we must ensure our public workforce sets the example. SB 136 reinforces that commitment by affirming that workers at the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission deserve the same respect and protections as other state employees.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 136.

Thank you for your time and consideration.