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Patrick Moran – President

**HB 1356 – Labor and Employment – Civic and Related Activities – Protection
(Maryland Employee Civic Activity and Lawful Expression Protection)
Government, Labor, and Elections
March 5, 2026**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports House Bill 1356. House Bill 1356 establishes protections for employees when engaging in political activity, civic activities, or other forms of lawful expression. The bill prohibits an employer from taking adverse action against an employee for engaging in political activity, civic activity, and lawful expression. The bill also prohibits an employer from: i) retaliating against an employee for refusing to participate in employer-favored political activities; ii) maintaining or enforcing a policy that restricts lawful off-duty protected civic activity; or iii) maintaining, sharing, or using a list or database to disadvantage an employee or applicant because of protected activity.

Furthermore, the bill prohibits an employer from coercing an employee to: make political contributions; attend political or public-relations events; endorse or oppose a candidate, party, cause or public policy; or sign, publish or disseminate political statements as a condition of employment. The bill provides the opportunity for an employee aggrieved by an employer's violation to bring a civil action in circuit court for appropriate relief.

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 every day delivering critical public services in their communities.

AFSCME supports workers' freedom to engage in political, civic, and other lawful expressive activities, without the fear of retaliatory or coercive actions from their employer. Moreover, workers should not feel pressured or required to engage in political activity that is favored or promoted by their employer. This legislation establishes important protections for employees while also promoting democratic values.

We urge the committee to submit a favorable report on House Bill 1356.