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My testimony:

Under Maryland law, counties and Boards of Education do bargain with educators over salaries, wages, hours, and working conditions, but the State itself has drawn the line that bars public-school employee organizations from calling or directing a strike. That distinction matters. The limits educators face are not simply the result of a difficult local bargaining table; they are the product of a state legal framework that denies teachers a form of collective action still recognized for many other workers. Maryland has seen before what happens when those pressures become intolerable: in Harford County in May 1976, teachers walked out during a budget and salary impasse because the conditions imposed on educators had become conditions imposed on students. That principle remains true today. A teacher's working conditions are a student's learning conditions. I am not seeking luxury; I am already working a second job just to keep pace with rising housing, utility, and food costs. What I want is the dignity of one job being enough so that I can focus fully on student engagement, lesson planning, differentiation, and safe, effective instruction. When class sizes become unsafe, when special educators are overloaded with caseloads that undermine individualized service, and when educators are denied meaningful power to reject those conditions, students absorb the harm. In that sense, this is also an issue of democratic expression: suppressing collective action does not eliminate dissent, it only silences educators who are trying to speak up for themselves and for their students.