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Patrick Moran - President

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**Testimony**  
**HB 1123 – Local Health Department – Funding—**  
**Support**

AFSCME Council 3 represents 30,000 State and Higher Education employees in Maryland; including state employees who work in our Local Health Departments. We support HB 1123. This legislation expands what the appropriations distributed under the state’s funding formula for the local health departments can be spent on to include: infrastructure relating to the data management of communicable diseases, personal protective equipment for clinical staff, and equipment needs for preparing for a communicable disease emergency. This legislation also provides an increase in the funding formula for the local health departments for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and beyond.

Our local health departments play a vital role in promoting public health in the jurisdictions they serve. They build relationships with community partners and are capable of doing outreach to populations that aren’t served in many traditional health care models. Despite their important role in our communities, chronic underfunding has caused many of our LHDs to be short-staffed and under-resourced. We’ve seen this in the past year with the pandemic. As an example, the access our members had to PPE this pandemic was varied depending on what local health department they worked in. In some local health departments, there were facemasks accessible for staff and visitors. In others, facemasks were just staff, or only visitors. At some, facemasks weren’t available at all and staff had to purchase their own. HB 1123 addresses these issues by increasing funding and allows some flexibility with where funding goes for when responding to communicable disease emergencies.

For all of these reasons, we urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1123. Thank you.

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