



SEIU MARYLAND & DC STATE COUNCIL
1410 Bush Street, Suite F, Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 13**
Influence on Collective Bargaining – Prohibition on Use of Public Funds and
Income Tax Addition Modification

House Appropriations and Ways & Means Committees
February 3, 2021
1:30 PM

Presented to: Maggie McIntosh, Chairman
By: Terry Cavanagh, Executive Director

SEIU Maryland & DC State Council urges a **Favorable Report to HB 13**. We commend Majority Leader Luedtke for sponsoring this important legislation.

With over two million members, SEIU is the largest union in North America. We are uniting workers in the sectors health care, public services, including in public education, and property services to improve lives and the services we provide. In the Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia area, we represent over 50,000 workers.

This bill addresses the use of anti-union or union-busting campaign in both the private sector and the public sector. First, let us address the **public sector**.

Public budgets appear to be divided into two kinds. One, when the burden on public budgets is great and the other, when they are greater. You have heard from many public employers about their need for additional resources to fulfill their mission. What you may not hear about is how some public employers can find the money to pay law firms to campaign against their employees' choice in an election.

We have seen public administrations, within this very county spending tens of thousands of precious public dollars on union busting or, as the firms advertise it, "union avoidance".

On January 22, President Joe Biden, in an Executive Order, issued these words:

"It is the policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining. The Federal Government should serve as a model employer."

We believe the same should apply to the State of Maryland – serve as a model employer. Would a model employer spend scant public resources attempting to thwart or influence an election in which the employer is not a choice of the voters? The choice before workers is whether or not they wish to be represented by a labor organization for the purposes of collective bargaining. The choice is theirs. An employer, especially a model public employer, should be neutral in this decision by the workforce.

Maryland would not be the first state to pass this kind of legislation. Others have taken this path and they have not turned back.

Private Sector - With regards to the private sector, we applaud the creative and logical approach of decoupling from the federal tax code and not allowing deductions for expenses related to union avoidance. We believe the federal tax code should be re-written so that workers, through our tax system, are not underwriting the very campaigns being waged against them. Recent studies have shown that a significant majority of workers, if given a free choice, would opt for union representation and collective bargaining. The choice should be theirs. Employers who engage in anti-union, union avoidance or union busting campaigns, may claim they are only using their right to free speech. However, that is not sufficient reason to allow a deduction for the cost of running such campaigns.

Until such time as the federal tax code is changed and, perhaps as a spur to bring about that change, we favor amending the code in Maryland to disallow those deductions.

We ask a Favorable Report on HB 13. Thank you.