



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SB 4 – Maryland Public Ethics Law – Retaliation for Reporting or Participating in Investigation - Prohibition
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 4, 2021

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 4 – Maryland Public Ethics Law – Retaliation for Reporting or Participating in Investigation - Prohibition. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Corruption can be difficult to root out, but we must continue to strive to do so, to maintain the integrity and legitimacy of our government. It has always been the position of organized labor to increase transparency and accountability in government. We know that all levels of government report to us: the voters, taxpayers, and residents of Maryland.

SB 4 provides greater accountability by prohibiting any retaliation against a state worker from reporting on unethical behavior or participating in an ethics investigation. Without this shield, workers are far less likely to report on potential corruption and rule breaking, having to weigh the option of doing the right thing and potentially losing their job. Instead of putting them in a no-win situation, we need to encourage them to speak up when they see something wrong, firm in the knowledge that we will have their backs in the fight.

We need to protect and shield public servants who do the right thing. We need to provide them with the support necessary to keep government transparent and honest.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB 4.