



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

Senate Finance Committee
March 23rd, 2021
1:00 PM

Presented to: Delores G. Kelley, Chairman
By: Terry Cavanagh, Executive Director

SEIU Maryland & DC State Council urges a **Favorable Report to HB 13**. We commend House Majority Leader Luedtke for sponsoring this important legislation and to the House of Delegates for passing it.

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 campaigns in the public sector. The portion of the bill as introduced was amended and references to the private sector were taken out.

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 – to 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.

If we wanted a level playing field and wanted public employers to be allowed to spend public resources to AGAINST a union, using some of the same tactics as used to intimidate workers in the private sector, why wouldn't we also allow the workers to be paid by the public to campaign FOR selecting a bargaining representative? We wouldn't. The public's tax dollars SHOULD NOT be used for such purposes either FOR or AGAINST.

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

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