



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 158 – Election Law – Time Off for Employee Voting
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 158 – Election Law – Time Off for Employee Voting. My name is Donna S. Edwards, 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.

Expanding access to voting for more voters and reducing the obstacles for them to exercise their right to vote, has been a bedrock value of the Labor movement in the United States and around the world. With the expansion of Early Voting in Maryland in 2010, we have seen increased participation with each passing election, and with mail-in voting, turnout has increased even more. We should always be seeking new ways to make the process easier and hurdles smaller.

Under Maryland law, employers must give registered voters a two-hour break on Election Day to allow them to vote, if they so desire. SB 158 expands that right to include Early Voting and mail-in voting for such a break. This commonsense measure brings election law into harmony with the new and expanded forms of voting we now have available in the State. It costs the taxpayers nothing for this change and provides workers in Maryland with more opportunities to participate in our elections.

We ask for a favorable report on SB 158.