

# **SEIU Testimony In Favor of HB13 FINANCE COMM. - In**

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**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.

**X HB 13 - CB - MD DC AFL-CIO - SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Edwards, Donna

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## **HB 13 – Influence on Collective Bargaining – Prohibition on Use of Public Funds Senate Finance Committee March 23, 2021**

### **SUPPORT**

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

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support HB 13 – Influence on Collective Bargaining – Prohibition on Use of Public Funds and Income Tax Addition Modification. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

In a recent Executive Order, President Biden reaffirmed the position of the United States on collective bargaining rights by stating “*It is also the policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining.*”<sup>1</sup> HB 13 prohibits the State government, as well as County and Municipal governments, from spending taxpayer dollars to influence organizing and union elections. We cannot allow the taxes paid by workers to be used by our government to deny the right to collectively bargain to Maryland’s public workers. Maryland needs to follow the lead of the United States in affirming our commitment to workers. We need to prohibit the use of our tax dollars being spent to hurt workers.

The original version of HB 13 included a provision that would have prohibited private businesses from deducting from their taxes the costs incurred for union-busting on the job site. Unions are saddened to see that this was amended out, thus continuing to incentivize businesses to deny the right to collectively bargain to their workers with a friendly tax code for union-busting. However, HB 13 still provides protections for public-sector workers from having their own tax dollars used against them, and for that reason, **we urge a favorable vote on HB 13.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/22/executive-order-protecting-the-federal-workforce/>

**AFSCME\_FAV\_HB13\_Amended.pdf**

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**Testimony**  
**HB 13 – Influence on Collective Bargaining – Prohibition on Use of Public Funds**  
**Finance**  
**March 23, 2021**  
**Support**

AFSCME Council 3 supports the passage of HB 13. This legislation would prohibit a unit of State, county, or municipal government from knowingly using public funds to influence certain decisions of certain employees relating to collective bargaining.

Throughout our country's history, we have seen undue influence used in an attempt to pre-determine the outcome of engagement between labor and management. All too often this has resulted in outcomes not representative of the truer result if the scales had not been tipped toward one side. Maryland governments should not be tipping the scales with appropriations to tamp down employee free association and employee voices in workplaces.

This legislation marks a positive step forward by ensuring public funds cannot be used to support or oppose an employee organization that represents or seeks to represent the employees of the unit of State, county or municipal government, or influencing becoming a member of an employee organization.

AFSCME Council 3 applauds the efforts of the sponsor to address these issues, and we request a favorable report of HB 13.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.  
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.  
800.492.1996

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