

Written Testimony of
CHRISTOPHER LINDSTROM

RE: Support of HB 1225

Submitted to the Maryland House Appropriations Committee on March 4, 2022

My name is Christopher Lindstrom, a librarian at Charles County Public Library, and I want to express my support for House Bill 1225 and for the library workers of Harford County. I have been following and inspired by library unionization efforts in Maryland since I read about Baltimore County's successful campaign but I'm also worried about how long my coworkers may have to wait before we can earn the right to organize ourselves.

I could write many pages on the despair and mistreatment of my colleagues but I will be brief with the hope that these injustices will be addressed in time. I must impart upon you the speed and severity with which our library system is being hollowed out and corporatized. In the last few years, our administration has prioritized their own comfort and salaries, seldom ever spending time in our branches. Our skilled Circulation Department has been rebranded to Customer Service and there is a concerted effort to slash full time positions into part time ones with no benefits. We are losing valuable teachers, local historians, and important advocates for our community because full time openings are so infrequent and they can no longer afford to wait for a career that they love but is becoming impossible to afford.

From what I've observed, our collective exhaustion and low morale is affecting our capacity to serve the public at the level they deserve at a time when many patrons need desperate help finding housing, unemployment, and fighting evictions. It is my sincere hope that efforts bravely undertaken by Baltimore County and Harford County library workers can be expanded statewide so we can earn better conditions for ourselves and the power to make our library better for all.

I ask for you to amend this legislation state-wide so librarians in every county of Maryland can earn this necessary right.

Sincerely,
Christopher Lindstrom