



Written Testimony of

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RE: Support of HB1225

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

Thank you Chair Maggie McIntosh, Vice Chair Mark S. Chang and members of the House Appropriations Committee for providing me the opportunity to weigh in on this very important piece of legislation before your committee. **I am here today to tell you about organizing among library employees in the state of Maryland.**

Last year I worked with library employees in Baltimore County to successfully pass legislation and navigate the process to vote for union representation. I'm happy to tell you that the process was successful and Baltimore county library employees are negotiating their first contract.

While working that campaign, interest was generated among employees in other counties. I received inquiries from multiple other counties. I've conveyed to employees the legislative challenge needed to accomplish in order to successfully engage in a campaign to win representation. The employees in Harford County were committed enough that they wanted to move forward. We began the process that brings us here today.

In all my exchanges with library staff, be it Harford County now, Baltimore County last year, or others in stages too early to name, everyone is united in their love of the work and service to the community. Their desire to unionize is not borne out of selfish reasons, rather a true desire to make the systems they love better through having a voice at work and a part in decision-making within the workplace. After all, they are the ones on the frontlines, serving the public every day, not administration.

I come before you to request you vote yes for HB 1225. Not only so that Harford County library staff can have an opportunity to unionize, but to allow other counties, embarking on the

process to not have to fight for legislation before they can pursue their Constitutional right to organize. It's simply an unnecessary battle.

Expanding HB 1225 is the right thing to do for the citizens of Maryland and our library workers, to include Howard County library staff. Currently library staff in that county have the right to unionize, but the law is prohibitive. When I tell employees that by law I have to share their names with the system director, they convey fear of retaliation. When I speak to part-timers and tell them the law only covers full-time, they feel excluded. This law does not secure workers their rights. These workers deserve to be covered by HB 1225 also.

The Maryland General Session is short, and there is always a lot for our distinguished legislators to accomplish. In the name of efficiency and fairness, vote favorably for HB 1225 and its expansion to state-wide coverage, including Howard County.

Thank you.