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HB 1225 – Education – Harford County Library – Collective Bargaining House Appropriations Committee March 8, 2022

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards
President
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Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1225 – Education – Harford County Library – Collective Bargaining. 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.

The freedom to form and join a union is core to the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights and is an “enabling” right—a fundamental right that ensures the ability to protect other rights.¹ HB 1225 opens the door to Harford County Librarians, allowing them to make their own decision as to whether they want to organize and form a union, or not. Fundamentally, this is enabling legislation. It does not mandate a union. It does not force any workers to join or oppose a union. It simply affirms the human rights of workers to chart their own path, make their own decisions, and determine their own futures.

But we should go further. In an Executive Order from early last year, 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.*”² We believe that the State of Maryland should follow the lead of the United States and do the same. HB 1225 is an affirmation of our values to encourage and empower workers to decide their own fate, and not be tied solely to the decisions of the employers.

For the past year, Harford County Librarians have been seeking this right, and with the enabling legislation of HB 1225, they can finally realize it. **And for that reason, we ask for a favorable report.**

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/22/executive-order-protecting-the-federal-workforce/>