

To whom this may concern,

My name is Tierra Farley and I am writing testimony to support SB 475 and HB 580 for why MTA management and sergeants need the right to a collective bargain agreement. I have worked for The State of Maryland /Maryland Transit for 17 years. I began my tenure as a frontline employee, a bus operator. Assisting patrons and providing world class customer service, while transporting them from point A to B safely was very rewarding. After 6.5 years of being a union employee and transporting the city, I changed my career. I joined management hoping to make a difference and thought I would receive the same treatment as union employees, if not better. Unbeknownst to me, I would walk into career reminiscent of The Hunger Games.

I started my management career as transportation supervisor, which entailed many vital duties. I supervised union employees, evaluated revenue service, responded to the public regarding travel information, complaints and service issues (not an exhaustive list). The harder I worked, the more I had to deal with unprofessional managers who thrived on unethical work practices and changed my work hours whenever they felt the need to do so. I understood I was signing on to be an essential employee, however it did not bother me because as a bus operator. I knew what it meant to be an essential employee, reporting to work doing adverse weather etc, but changing shifts strictly for discipline is absurd. My first year, I had perfect attendance, and it went unrecognized. I did not receive a bonus, or any incentives. In fact, during my first annual appraisal, I mentioned this to my manager, and he did not believe me. They postponed my evaluation until he checked my attendance record. Besides not being recognized for perfect attendance and producing exceptional work quality. Many managers subjected me to bullying and intimidation and whenever I addressed the unethical work practices, my schedule would suddenly change.

I am presently an assistant superintendent and I assist the superintendent with directing, monitoring, and managing personnel and equipment of a bus division. I still manage union employees and I observe the vast amount of benefits and incentives they are awarded, while management gets nothing in return. They pay all the employees I manage more than me. Also, if a manager is hired from outside the company, their starting salary will be more than a manager who has tenure. Management works more hours and we are essential employees, just like the union employees.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, they denied many managers hazard pay because they did not have 100 hours of compensatory time in their bank. We had to work during the pandemic without protection. Many state and federal agencies closed and worked from home. Managers were required to report to the building and constantly be at risk for contracting Covid-19. They forced us to distribute face mask to bus operators, and no one distributed face masks to us. Executive leadership removed us from our normal duties to act as health care workers, screening bus operators and office staff as they reported for work. Taking their temperature, asking health related questions (violating HIPPA) was our number one duty for several weeks.

I am concerned about health and safety. Every day, I enter my office and have to wonder what the black dust is surrounding the vent and little black specs that resemble mold. I reached out to the proper department and was told I have nothing to worry about. Executive management is aware and has done nothing. Whenever we voice our concerns, we are told "you're not a team player". I requested training and was asked, "why do you feel you're entitled to anything".

I can go on and on about the deplorable work conditions and unethical works practices and unfair pay practices, but for time consideration, I minimized the plethora of issues. Everyone should be treated fairly and equally, which is why I support SB 475 and HB 580. A collective bargain agreement will ensure managers and sergeants are treated fairly and given what they deserve. For these reasons, I urge this body to pass this bill.

Respectfully,

Ms. Tierra Farley

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