

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Larra Cuffley
SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act
February 29th, 2024

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Laura Cuffley, and I am a Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist at the Glenwood branch of the Howard County Library System. I am writing to urge you to pass SB 591, which would give library workers the right to collectively bargain.

For me the disparity of expectation between adult & children’s instructional staff is a constant issue. We regularly teach 8-10 classes per month, plus outreach and school visits, as well as special committee projects. Our home life is impacted significantly as well. We often work 7 day work weeks and have limited leave approval, even with more than sufficient PTO. If we speak up about the stresses we feel and the issues we see in our branches, we are often made to feel ashamed for having said anything at all. This is largely due to inconsistent or non-existent continuing education training or personnel development training. All of this contributes to a very high turnover of staff due to inflexible policy and top- down decisions.

I am very tired. I am tired of us having our voices continuously silenced by coercion. I’m tired of not seeing my family because I am working every weekend. I think there should be complete transparency in decisions affecting staff and that staff should be valued enough to have significant input before changes are enacted. I believe all of this can be achieved through collective bargaining. I urge you to pass SB 591. Thank you.

Larra Cuffley

Children’s Instructor & Research Specialist

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