

Written Testimony Submitted for the Senate Finance Committee
Testimony of Elinatan Nelson
SB 591 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act
February 29th, 2024

SUPPORT

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

My name is Ellie Nelson, and I am a Collection Development Assistant PTH at the Anne Arundel County Public Library Headquarters. As a PTH I am responsible for ensuring our collections are complete, accurate, and fulfilling. I'm proud to work for our county public library, but it's difficult to imagine building a career here when I feel unheard at work and underappreciated and undervalued by our system.

I rely on my job to keep me afloat, but it is not always up to the task. Though we are told our libraries are fundamental parts of our community, it is difficult to feel that I am a part of that community at all, since I can barely afford to live here. Because of the staffing crisis we have, I have to handle issues that should be dealt with by more senior employees, and things often fall through the cracks completely as no one is able to track everything. We have asked for more hours, more support, and more attention, but we are told it is impossible. Collective bargaining rights for libraries have been litigated time and time again in Maryland, but this bill puts an end to that. It gives all of us a fair opportunity to work together to build libraries and communities that we are proud of. I am ready to begin that process, so please support SB 591.

Ellie Nelson
Collection Development Assistant PTH
Anne Arundel County Public Library