

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Tracy Lee
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 Tracy Lee, and I am a Library Associate II at the Eastport Annapolis Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system.

I came to the library later in my life, and my work experience wasn't taken into consideration when I was offered the job at the starting salary, with not a lot of room to negotiate. I wish that my experiences could have impacted my starting salary, since all future adjustments have been based on that. We have no set policies for how these things are determined at the moment. Being treated in a way that is comparable to others in my position would allow me to save more for retirement and give me the security I need for myself and my family.

Though we are often encouraged to voice our opinions, those opinions are rarely taken into consideration in any serious way. Whether it is small things, like an unplowed parking lot, or large things, like the unfair treatment of our part-time hourly (PTH) staff, we go unheard. PTH issues affect everyone at the branch- part time hourly employees are our backbone and we need them to manage the desk while full time and part time staff do all the various tasks we do inside and outside our library. We wouldn't be able to operate our libraries without them, and they deserve a protected voice at work and a seat at the bargaining table.

If this legislation passes, and we are given the right to collectively bargain, we would have a voice in our workplace and meaningful accountability. We would have a seat at the table, and administration would have to take our ideas into consideration and negotiate with us over policies. We want a voice. We want a process. But first, we want SB 591 to pass. Thank you for your time.

Tracy Lee
Library Associate II
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