

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Christopher Moon Kim
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 Christopher Moon Kim, and I am a Driver with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I am a part time worker, which presents me with unique challenges. My part time hours are dependent on whether or not there is an outreach event. I am not compensated if the events are canceled, but I also am unable to pick up shifts at other jobs as a result of the scheduling. This is additionally frustrating because part time workers are entitled to almost no benefits, which has made my life both personally and financially challenging. I am dependent on other part time jobs as well that also lack benefits.

Though my local branch managers have tried to get permission from headquarters to expand my job role and my wages, we have been told that my best option is to apply for a different position. As the sole driver of the mobile book van, this worries me for the future of this important program. Beyond just expanding physical access to the library's books, our mobile van also brings critical tech resources into our community. We expand accessibility to library services, but we do not make the role attractive enough to retain someone in it. If we were to have collective bargaining, my concerns would be taken more seriously and addressed with a sense of urgency. As the primary outreach driver, my issues cannot be prioritized without collective bargaining rights.

I want everyone to understand that libraries are community centers and every neighborhood depends on the accessibility to the libraries' services. Collective bargaining rights will help improve those services and increase resources for the community while giving library workers protection from burnout, discrimination, and neglect. Preserving library resources means giving library workers bargaining rights. This body is empowered to do that. Please pass SB 591, and help us continue to help our communities.

Christopher Moon Kim
Driver
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