



House Bill 736

Labor and Employment - Employment Rights for Local Government Employees - Establishment

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 23, 2016

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 736. The bill would require all counties to enact local laws authorizing collective bargaining between the county and any employee organization that the county has recognized as an exclusive representative of its employees.

At this time, many county government employers have some amount of collective bargaining with their employees. This law requires an expansion of collective bargaining that would require all counties to extend the right to collectively bargain to all of their employees - except for supervisory, managerial, or confidential employees, and elected or appointed officials. This is a one-size-fits-all design that would expand collective bargaining rights in a third of Maryland's counties.

Maryland county governments vary in many ways. They come in different forms of government, including charter, commission, and code home rule. They are different sizes, ranging from less than two hundred employees to more than ten thousand. And, they have different collective bargaining rights. Some authorize collective bargaining for all of the employees described in HB 736, some have it for public safety employees, and others do not have collective bargaining at this time.

Requiring even Maryland's smallest county governments and any municipal governments in Maryland that have more than 20 employees to authorize collective bargaining to almost all of their employees will create a new administrative burden, and could also create additional personnel costs. The low threshold and broad application of HB 736 puts pressure on some of the state's smallest jurisdictions which may be least able to accommodate additional administration and costs.

Despite their differences, Maryland county governments all have one thing in common. Their goal is to provide for the health, safety, and wellbeing of their citizens, and that of future generations. Allowing some reasonable flexibility in local governance can support counties as they strive to reach this common goal.

For this reasons, MACo requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 736.