



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President
Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer
Gerald W. Jackson

June 29, 2020

Honorable Boyd K. Rutherford
Board of Public Works
Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street, Room 117
Annapolis, MD 21401

Honorable Peter Franchot
Board of Public Works
Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street, Room 117
Annapolis, MD 21401

Honorable Nancy K. Kopp
Board of Public Works
Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street, Room 117
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear BPW Members:

State employees are more than just a line item in the budget. They are the unseen frontline workers in a pandemic that threatens the health and well being of all Marylanders. The Governor, the media and the public have called them heroes.

They continued to serve Marylanders from the very moment the pandemic struck, quickly adjusting to massive changes to their own lives while meeting the challenges of serving our state. For weeks, they reported to jobs without being given the personal protection equipment needed to safely provide services to clients, patients, inmates and the public, while fearing what they may be exposing their own loved ones to when they went home.

The public suffered from the already understaffed state services, especially the unemployment insurance offices and social services offices as UI applications rose 3000% and applications for food stamps and temporary assistance rose from 25,000 applications in February to well over 160,000 in April. BUT, the state workers continued to work tirelessly within the constraints of poor processing systems and woeful understaffing bringing much needed assistance to families and children.

The cuts Governor Hogan is proposing go in the wrong direction as Maryland navigates the conjoined health and economic crisis of the COVID 19 pandemic. He should be trying to strengthen our economy and the services that keep Marylanders participating in helping our

businesses recover. The thousands of Marylanders who have recently lost their jobs are looking for unemployment insurance, Medicaid and help with housing and other living costs. Now is when Marylanders need State services. We must fund the frontlines, not cut them.

The economy is shifting weekly. The budget picture is not clear on the first day of the fiscal year and the FY 2020 books have not even closed. Marylanders have until July 15th to file their taxes. The federal government is hammering out the next COVID 19 fiscal relief package that will have financial assistance to states.

The Board of Public works need to present a fiscal plan for Maryland based on critical analytical data and creative consideration of Maryland's Rainy Day Fund and other available financial sources. Our economy is already demand-constrained. Small businesses are struggling to survive. Taking actions that needlessly and immediately makes thousands of Maryland workers to take millions of dollars away from their spending in their communities and the state's economy only further sets back Maryland's road to recovery.

Our unions stand together in asking the Board of Public Works to not balance the budget on the backs of our state workers. Cutting pay, cutting staff, and cutting services will hurt every Marylander resulting in our public health, well-being and economic recovery vulnerable to deeper ravishes of the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Donna S. Edwards
President

cc: Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor, State of Maryland
Honorable William Ferguson, President, Maryland Senate
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates

DSE:kt
opeiu2,aficio