

Maryland State Legislative Session 2019 Report
American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland)
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Despite the overwhelming competition to get bills passed all the way through to the governor, AFT-Maryland and its affiliate unions did well in the 2019 legislative session. Bills passed, compromises were made, raises were put in the budget and the first implementation of the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations are now law.

EDUCATION BILLS

The first phase of the **Commission on Innovation and Excellence** or the Kirwan Commission passed in the bill named *The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*. Attached are the budget details on the legislation. Baltimore City Public Schools will get additional funds for areas of concentrated poverty and for community schools. As part of the blueprint, legislation defining a Community School passed this session as well.

Gov. Hogan vetoed and the legislature did an override on a bill that will once again give local school districts the ability to decide the start and end dates for their school calendars. This finally ends the long nightmare of trying to operate under Hogan’s mandated schedule of starting after Labor Day and ending by June 15th.

Another bill puts a teacher and a parent on the Maryland State Board of Education. Hogan vetoed the bill last year when it had two teachers and a parent. Eliminating one teacher was a compromise with the governor. The new members must run for the seats in an election coordinated through Maryland Department of Education.

Baltimore City Public Schools will receive grants from the state to help with temporary measures to deal with lead in the drinking water. The bill, sponsored by labor’s own, Sen. Cory McCray, will also provide money for water testing.

Finally, school districts will have a clear definition of a “supervisor” and will not be able to keep employees out of a collective bargaining unit by classifying the position as a manager or supervisor. To have the title, the person will have to actually supervise other employees. Hogan did not sign the bill so it automatically goes into law.

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE BILLS

State workers in AFT Healthcare-Maryland (Local 5197), Maryland School for the Deaf (4828), MCEA (1935), and MPEC (6197), received their 3% COLA in the budget. Plus, contingent on increased revenues, a 2% plus an additional 1% raise and a \$500 bonus.

After several attempts at legislation in the past, the teachers at the Maryland School for the Deaf will now officially be state employees. Hogan signed the bill and they now have the right to due process.

Nurses in AFT Healthcare-Maryland had a bill requiring the Department of Health to establish labor/management committees at state mental health facilities. The sponsor, Sen. Guy Guzzone, switched strategy and put the language in the budget, which passed. The committees, made up of nurses and management, will develop a patient/nurse staffing report that must be submitted to the Maryland Department of Health.

The Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses (BCFPHN) have a working group on nurse training and development. This was a compromise coordinated by Del. Bonnie Cullison with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). Cullison submitted a bill to establish a workgroup on training for nurses in local health facilities. MDH asked the union to drop the bill; in exchange, it will work with the nurses on establishing protocols on professional development.

City Union of Baltimore (CUB) members who are among the 25% lowest-paid city employees will now be eligible for a property tax credit up to \$2,500 on their home in Baltimore City. This is possible through a bill sponsored by Del. Stephanie Smith. It now moves to the city council to work on the parameters of the legislation. Another bill supported by CUB will increase the number of civilian employees in the city police department.

The Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees (BCFPE) supported several bills to increase the pension tax deduction for Hometown Heroes. Unfortunately, they did not pass due to their costs. However, a bill lowering the age for military pensions did pass, which will enable us to work on a lower age for the Hometown Heroes.

LABOR BILLS

Labor's #1 priority, a \$15 minimum wage, passed! Maryland became the sixth state in the country and the only one below the Mason Dixon line to pass a \$15 minimum wage after successfully overriding a veto by Hogan. This is a huge win after an intense multi-year effort to pass it in the state legislature by the Fight for \$15 Coalition that lead the effort.

Businesses with 15 or more employees will follow a schedule that reaches \$15 in 2025, while smaller companies will have to pay \$15 starting in 2026. The schedule is as follows:

Date	15 or More Employees	14 or Less Employees
Jan 1, 2020	\$11.00	\$11.00
Jan 1, 2021	\$11.75	\$11.60
Jan 1, 2022	\$12.50	\$12.20
Jan 1, 2023	\$13.25	\$12.80
Jan 1, 2024	\$14.00	\$13.40
Jan 1, 2025	\$15.00	\$14.00
Jan 1, 2026		\$14.60
July 1, 2026		\$15.00

A bill making it illegal to force low wage workers to sign a non-compete agreement also passed. The non-compete agreements basically made it impossible for employee making \$15 or less to go to a competing store or restaurant for a higher wage or better working conditions.

AFT BILLS

AFT supports legislation that goes after predatory student loan servicers. AFT-Maryland belongs to the Maryland Student Debt Coalition and helped to pass HB 594/SB 670 The Student Loan Servicers - Unfair, Abusive, or Deceptive Trade Practices Act, which prohibits a student loan servicer from employing any scheme, device, or artifice to mislead a student loan borrower and from engaging in any unfair, abusive, or deceptive trade practice.

SPECIAL THANKS

All of this of course was a team effort. Local union leadership and members who testified on bills made a huge difference. AFT-Maryland leadership and staff did an amazing job of providing assistance, coordination, and basically anything that needed to be done.

Thank you to everyone!

Blueprint for Maryland's Future Kirwan Commission

EXPENDITURES

2019-20	\$255 million
2020-21	\$355 million
2022	\$500 million
TOTAL	\$1.1 billion over 3 years

The money will come from the \$200 million set aside in the 2019 budget, casino revenues (Lock Box) and online sales tax.

Salaries - all certified educators

If a school district provides 3% raise – the state will provide an additional 1.5% increase

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

2020	219 schools will qualify
2021	235 schools

Baltimore City - 130

Prince George's County - 45

15 counties will receive funding for at least one school next year.

PRE-K

\$32 million

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- \$65 million
- \$23 million - tutoring K-3 students performing below grade level in English or math. Schools may use paraeducators to provide this one-on-one and small group tutoring
- \$2.5 million for new teacher mentorship programs and teacher career ladders
- \$2 million to fund a mental health services coordinator in every school district

In addition to his own Dept. of Education, Gov. Hogan wanted more government oversight – so the bill includes the creation of an inspector general (IG). Hogan also suggested he be the one to select the IG. However, the bill requires the position be filled through a unanimous vote between the governor, the treasurer, and the attorney general.