



To the Maryland Defenders Union:

The workers of the Office of the Public Defender serve the people of Maryland in seeking justice, liberty, and civil rights for indigent clients. Upholding your mission to provide outstanding representation to your clients requires that you can effectively advocate for yourselves and for them within and outside the OPD. You have determined that unionizing is the most effective way to achieve this.

I therefore support your decision to organize with AFSCME Council 3.

I support your efforts to speak with one voice on the issues that urgently affect you and those you represent. Organizing will allow you to speak out and act against racism and classism in the legal system, mass incarceration, and police brutality and misconduct. The union will give you strength in fighting for adequate funding for your agency and for the fair allocation of resources within it. Amidst our current public health and budgetary crises, it will allow you to effectively advocate for yourselves and defend those most vulnerable to these emergencies. I also stand with you as you seek collective bargaining rights for the attorneys in your agency, a right other state employees currently enjoy. Our state is stronger when workers are empowered in this way.

I look forward to working with you as you build the Maryland Defenders Union.

Signed,

Delegate Gabriel Acevero (D39)
Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett (D32)
Senator Jill P. Carter (D41)
Senator Shelly Hettleman (D11)
Delegate Jazz Lewis (D24)

Delegate Brooke Lierman (D46)
Delegate David Moon (D20)
Delegate Emily Shetty (D18)
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher (D18)