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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Maryland School for the Deaf Faculty and Staff File for Union Election in Effort to Bring
Democracy to the Workplace**

Baltimore, MD- Over 300 teachers, speech language pathologists, dorm counselors, and other faculty and staff of the Maryland School for the Deaf filed paperwork today with the Maryland State Labor Relations Board demanding an election that could grant the workers collective bargaining rights.

For years, members of the Maryland School for the Deaf Faculty and Staff Association (AFT-Maryland Local 4828, AFT, AFL-CIO) have appealed to school administrators and Governor Hogan to restore step increases and make efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce, but their pleas have been ignored. If these state employees win their election, it will mean administrators and state officials must meet with the workers and negotiate in good faith over pay, benefits, and working conditions at the school.

“I’m a high school science teacher and I’ve been teaching for 13 years. Because of frozen salaries and pay disparities, we’ve lost some dedicated teachers and staff. I’m going to vote “yes” for collective bargaining at MSD so we can negotiate to make sure salaries are fair - according to an appropriate scale,” said John Thuahnai, a high school science teacher.

Edna Johnston, President of the MSD Faculty and Staff Association commented *“We’ve tried for years to get the state to fund our school, to respect faculty and staff, to address lack of diversity and lack of staff retention at MSD, and to give us what we need to do the best for our students and our community. As we said in our mission statement at the beginning of this school year: To organize and empower our community, we must organize and empower ourselves.”*

AFT-Maryland President Kenya Campbell is excited that educators and staff will have the opportunity to speak with one collective voice in their workplace. *“Democracy should not just be fought for in our political lives, we should have democracy in our workplaces as well. MSD workers make sure that deaf or hard of hearing children in our state have a place where they can grow and thrive. These state employees are committed to our kids, and it’s time the state steps up and supports them, too.”*

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