JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 402
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3673 · 301-858-3673
800-492-7122 *Ext.* 3673
Jack.Bailey@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Dorsey Professional Park
23680 Three Notch Road, Unit 101
Hollywood, Maryland 20636
240-309-4238

January 20, 2021

Senate Bill 104 – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Electric Retractable Room Partitions – Operation Requirements

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 104, which would create safety standards for the use of electric retractable room partitions in Maryland schools.

In 2018, a tragic accident occurred in Virginia when a student at an elementary school died from injuries that he sustained when he was crushed between an electric retractable room partition and a wall. The following year, Virginia passed a bill to prevent future incidents of this kind from occurring in their schools. Senate Bill 104 has been drafted based on this legislation.

The bill states that a school employee may not operate an electric retractable room partition in a school building unless one of three conditions are met. The partition can be operated if it includes a safety sensor that automatically stops the movement of the partition when a body passes between the leading edge and a wall, an opposing partition, or the stacking area of the partition. The partition can also be operated if there are no students are present in the school building, or if the room where the partition is located is locked or otherwise free of or inaccessible to students. Senate Bill 104 also requires school employees at schools that use these partitions to be trained to be able to operate them safely. This bill applies to public and nonpublic schools, and requires the Maryland State Department of Education to publish model safety guidelines online.

We always have to be extra cautious when dealing with children. Residential garage doors require electronic eyes. A garage doors at a school is required to have an electric eye. These partitions should be required to have them as well. It is 2021, we shouldn't have mechanical walls that operate without electronic eyes anywhere, particularly in our schools.

Senate Bill 104 is identical to Senate Bill 258 from the 2020 Legislative Session as it passed this Committee unanimously and the Senate 45-0. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 104. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Jack Bailey
District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties