
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 176

TO: Senate Finance Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor
DATE: March 25, 2025
BILL: Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act (HB 176)

MDL POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The Department of Labor and its Maryland Occupational Safety and Health program (“MOSH”) are deeply committed to the mission of worker safety and health, and to improving both compliance with our State’s standards, and strengthening the standards themselves. With just a few exceptions, MOSH covers almost all of the 2.7 million people who work in Maryland, in both the private and the public sector.

This past year has been a tragic one for on-the-job deaths of workers in our State. Four of the workers who lost their lives worked in the public sector. And those deaths do not stand in isolation: rates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses are consistently higher in the public sector than in the private sector. That is the case not only in our state, but in other states as well, and is partly due to the fact that the public sector includes some occupations that are regularly exposed to serious hazards – firefighting, corrections and law enforcement, waste management. Risk is a given in these jobs; tragedy should not be. These outcomes are not inevitable, and they are not acceptable. We as a state must find ways to mitigate those risks and better protect the people who perform this critically-needed, difficult work that serves us all and makes our communities safe and livable.

This bill begins that process by placing a clear focus on public sector health and safety. We appreciate the sponsors’ willingness to work closely with the Department to address technical concerns we had with the structural and operational aspects of the original bill and are comfortable that the remaining concern – specifically, ensuring that the penalty scheme that is changed by this bill remains unchanged in the Public Safety Article law that incorporates that scheme by reference – has been addressed.

The Department looks forward to working with all stakeholders, including our sister agencies and local and country governments, to develop and implement a workplace violence prevention standard and to take other appropriate measures to better keep our public servants safe and healthy on the job.

The Department requests a favorable report on the bill, with adoption of the suggested amendments, and would be pleased to respond if the Committee has technical or informational questions.

For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti, at **Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov**.