

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

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 258 - Public Schools - Electric Retractable Room Partitions - Operation Requirements

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 258, 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. Last year, Virginia passed a bill to prevent future incidents of this kind from occurring in our schools. Senate Bill 258 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 present in the school building, or if the room where the partition is located is locked or otherwise free of or inaccessible to students. The bill also requires school employees at schools that use these partitions to be trained to be able to operate them safely.

We always have to be extra cautious when dealing with children. Residential garage doors require electronic eyes. A garage door at a school is required to have an electric eye. These partitions should be required to have them as well. It is 2020, we shouldn't have mechanical walls that operate without electronic eyes.

Along with this bill, I am introducing an amendment to extend this law to nonpublic schools, and to require the Maryland State Department of Education to publish model safety guidelines online. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 258. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

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