

Testimony in Support of House Bill 124
Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible
Diseases and COVID-19

House Economic Matters
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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 124 which would require Maryland Occupational Safety & Health to work in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health to establish mandatory and enforceable workplace protection standards specific to COVID-19, within three weeks of this bill's passage.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports worker's rights, and believes that every Maryland employee should be able to work in a safe working environment. With the contagious spread of COVID-19, it is even more imperative that employers are held accountable for the safety of their employees, while on the job and in the workplace. This requires standard minimum workplace standards and guidance to be formed by MOSH and the Maryland Department of Health. Emergency Temporary Standards will assist employers to classify exposure risk levels and require them to follow minimum safety standards, which will include respiratory protection and PPE standards, physical distancing standards, sanitation standards, ventilation standards, and training protocols. Requiring employers to notify Department of Health of positive cases and not allow infected or potentially infected workers in the workplace until safe to do so, will also help to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Requiring employers to provide employees with information about COVID-19, the process for making a MOSH complaint, and ensuring that employees are protected from retaliation by employers for making a complaint, is essential to maintaining the ETS as well as guaranteeing employer accountability.

MSEA requests a favorable report on House Bill 124.