



**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
HB 124 – Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees –
Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19
January 28, 2021**

SUPPORT

Chair Davis and members of the committee: On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 state, county and municipal government workers across Maryland, we urge you to support HB 124 – Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19.

The State of Maryland needs standards for COVID-19 workplace protections to recover from the unprecedented pandemic. Current Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) standards fail to adequately guarantee a safe workplace and guidance for essential workers.

Everyone recognizes the heightened exposure threat to all essential and frontline workers. When they get sick - it impacts everyone. It leads to staffing shortages in critical industries that are desperately needed by the public.

It is imperative that the state protect workers who are currently on the job, as well as those who will be returning to work through the governor's phased-in re-opening of the state. To adequately protect our essential workers, MOSH needs standard including:

- A hazard assessment of worksites to identify potential exposures in collaboration with employees and their exclusive bargaining representative.
- An employer written COVID exposure control plan to for every worksite.
- Appropriate protections in coordination with state and local health departments.

A failure to act now severely limits our state's ability to fight this pandemic, exacerbating and lengthening its deadly effects on all Marylanders. AFT-MD asks the committee for a favorable report on HB 124.

Marietta English
President