



January 26, 2021

**Testimony on HB124**  
***Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19***  
***Economic Matters***

**Position: Favorable**

My name is Katherine, a resident of Baltimore, District 43. I am a member of the Sunrise Movement Baltimore, a movement led by young people fighting against the climate crisis. This testimony represents my support for HB124 Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees.

Food and farm workers face unacceptable conditions across the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. Food and farmworkers are the backbone of our food system. Yet despite their integral contributions, farmworkers and their families face entrenched poverty, an unjust immigration system, and dangerous working conditions. Farm workers have been intentionally excluded from basic labor laws like the right to organize, minimum wage, and paid sick leave. COVID-19 has turned what was already a crisis into a mega-crisis.

We urge you to create permanent workplace safety standards so that workers are immediately protected in any future pandemics. As it stands today, there are Maryland workers – including food and farmworkers – who still are not provided adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), who are forced to stand shoulder to shoulder on poultry slaughter lines or lose their paychecks, who are being asked to come back to work when they are still sick, and who are too fearful to speak out for fear of retaliation from their employers. Without any enforceable and mandatory workplace safety standards in place for COVID-19, these employees have no recourse. And until our food and farmworkers are protected, our food supply chain remains at risk and community spread of this virus will continue.

I worry about the food and farm workers and all they and their families put at risk, including their own lives and well-being, in order to avoid retaliation. This is simply unjust! Frontline workers should be treated with dignity and respect. They do so much for us to make sure we have food on our tables and should be better protected.

We urge you to vote **favorably** for HB12.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Longabaugh  
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District 43