



January 26, 2021

Testimony on **HB0124 - “Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-10”**

Committee: **Economic Matters**

Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

Organization: Sunrise Movement Baltimore

Person Submitting: Molly Sherman, Political Team

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for considering my testimony today. My name is Molly Sherman. 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 **HB0124**.

Food and farm workers are the backbone of life, culture, and health in MD and have continued to provide for us throughout the pandemic, yet they have faced unacceptable conditions across the state. They 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 further exasperated this crisis, and we can no longer turn the other way.

As a concerned resident of the Maryland agricultural reserve, a person who profits off their subpar treatment by virtue of the food system, and invested student in farm work, I would like there to be change. I would like to be able to work in a food system where everyone is cared for and respected for the invaluable workers they are. In this evolving pandemic and as we face a reality of future ones, I want to know my family is also safe from the food we eat to fuel our bodies to fight.

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.

For these reasons we urge you to vote favorably for HB0124.

Sincerely,

Molly Sherman  
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