



**Hearing Testimony February 25, 2022
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC**

**House Bill 686 – Public Schools – Health and Safety – Carbon Dioxide Monitoring in Classrooms
Safe School Indoor Air Act**

SUPPORT

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in the region. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, faculty and staff at institutions of higher education, staff at non-profits, and many other working people across the region. SEIU Local 500 is asking that you support House Bill 686 the Safe School Indoor Air Act. We believe that no Maryland student or employee should be at risk of becoming ill due to poor air quality in the classroom.

SEIU Local 500 thanks Delegate Solomon for his leadership on this bill and many other issues important to our membership. House Bill 868 codifies indoor air standards, best practices, and educational sufficiency standards recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). HB 868 establishes the process for regularly testing and identifying under ventilated classrooms, fixes ventilation systems and requires an annual report of ventilation in schools.

The goal of House Bill 686 is to reduce illness and improve student performance in Maryland schools. As we come out of a global health pandemic caused by an airborne illness, we should all agree that the safety of the air in our public schools is of the utmost importance.

By passing House Bill 686 the Maryland General Assembly further ensures a safe and productive learning environment for our students and working conditions for the staff, and faculty. One of the state's most basic duties is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for our children. Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, we can do better and we must do better. We can make sure all students attending school can thrive without needless exposure to harmful levels of carbon dioxide.

SEIU Local 500 respectfully requests members of the Environment and Transportation Committee support HB 686 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

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