

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 431
Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumption – Long Covid
(Home of the Brave Act of 2024)

Senate Finance Committee
March 5, 2024

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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 431. Senate Bill 431 provides that a governmental essential worker is presumed to be suffering from a compensable occupational disease that was suffered in the course of employment if: i) the individual tested positive for Covid 19 within a specified timeframe after the individual performed labor or services at the individual's primary workplace or another assigned workplace; ii) the test was performed or the diagnosis was made by a licensed or certified health care practitioner; and iii) the individual has subsequently been diagnosed with long covid by a licensed or certified health care practitioner.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. 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).

Individuals suffering from long covid may experience a range of health symptoms including fatigue, fever, respiratory and heart symptoms, neurological symptoms, digestive symptoms that can last weeks, months, or years.¹ Essential government workers who risked their health and safety for the public during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and now have health related issues from long covid should be eligible for compensable claims under workers' compensation.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 431.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Long COVID or Post-COVID Conditions*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html#:~:text=People%20with%20Long%20COVID%20can,can%20sometimes%20Oresult%20in%20disability>. (last updated July 20, 2023).