



## Zeke Cohen

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*President*  
Baltimore City Council

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**To:** Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee  
**Re:** HB 176: Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Date:** February 18, 2025

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The Baltimore City Council is a collaborative body dedicated to delivering reliable, equitable, and sustainable results, which enhance the quality of life for all Baltimoreans. Through agency oversight, legislation, fiscal stewardship, and advocacy, we ensure the City gets the 'basics' right, while also striving toward long-term, systems-level transformation.

I believe that House Bill 176: Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act) will further enable the Baltimore City Council to enhance the quality of life for Baltimoreans employed by public entities. The bill will require our state government to lead the way in formalizing worker safety structures and processes in Maryland. Public employers should bear the standard of safe workplaces for others to follow.

Over the last few years in Baltimore City, we have lost two employees of a public agency due to unsafe working conditions. The City Council continues to investigate the circumstances that preceded these deaths, but there is no doubt that the proposed Public Employee Safety and Health Unit (PESHU) would be able to provide a higher level of regulation and enforcement to all public bodies than is presently available.

The bill also marries systemic transparency and accountability with my shared priority of growing the pipeline developing the capacity of our workforce. Leveraging civil penalty revenue to fund the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Fund is an innovative way for the General Assembly to support access to apprenticeship opportunities. Even further, this provision serves as a model for policymaking that drives progress toward multiple goals.

For all the reasons above, **I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 176.**

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