

**Testimony of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO
In Support of House Bill 176 – Labor and Employment – Occupational Safety and
Health – Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)**

Dear Chair Barbes, Vice Chair Chang and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Amy Millar, and I am the Special Assistant to the President of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO. On behalf of our union, representing thousands of public employees across Maryland, we urge a **favorable vote** on House Bill 176 – the Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act.

This legislation represents a critical step in ensuring the safety and health of Maryland’s public employees, who serve our communities with dedication and resilience, often under challenging and hazardous conditions. Unfortunately, current protections for public employees fall short of guaranteeing their well-being. House Bill 176 closes these gaps by strengthening Maryland’s workplace safety and health framework for public sector employees.

Key Provisions and Their Impact

1. Establishing a Public Employee Safety and Health Unit

The creation of a Public Employee Safety and Health Unit within the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MOSH) ensures that public employees’ workplaces receive the specialized attention they require. A dedicated unit will enhance enforcement of workplace safety and health laws, protecting those who serve the public.

2. Mandating Annual Reporting

Requiring the Commissioner of Labor to publish an annual report on workplace safety issues—including a list of citations issued to public employers—ensures transparency and accountability. This data will empower workers and policymakers to identify trends and proactively address risks.

3. Enhancing Recordkeeping Requirements

This bill strengthens data-driven safety efforts by mandating that public employers maintain accurate records of work-related deaths, injuries, and illnesses and submit these quarterly. Comprehensive reporting is essential to identify patterns and develop targeted interventions.

4. Strengthening Workplace Inspections

The bill emphasizes inspections in workplaces with the most complaints or citations, ensuring that enforcement resources are focused where they are needed most. Random, unannounced inspections further encourage compliance and deter unsafe practices.

5. Holding Public Employers Accountable

Senate Bill 26 introduces meaningful penalties for public employers who violate workplace safety laws. Accountability is a necessary step to ensure that public employees are not subjected to unsafe working conditions due to negligence or noncompliance.

6. **Addressing Workplace Violence**

Finally, this bill requires MOSH to establish a workplace violence prevention standard for all public sector workplaces. Public employees face unique risks, particularly in frontline roles, and this provision will offer critical protections against one of the most pervasive threats to worker safety.

Conclusion

Maryland's public employees are the backbone of our communities, and they deserve workplaces where their safety and health are prioritized. The Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act is a vital measure to protect public employees, promote accountability, and ensure that Maryland leads the way in workplace safety standards.

On behalf of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO, I urge this committee to give House Bill 176 a favorable report and help safeguard the workers who keep our state, counties and communities running.

Thank you for your time and consideration.