

**Senate Bill 26 – Labor and Employment – Occupational Safety and Health –
Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)
Finance Committee
January 29, 2025**

FAVORABLE

My name is Diana Desierto, I have worked as a speech language pathologist for 17 years with the Baltimore City Public School, and I am a proud member of Baltimore Teacher Union local 340. I am writing in strong support of this legislation and asking for your support of this bill.

I am writing to strongly support Senate Bill 26, as it directly addresses a critical issue that has affected my school community for far too long: the persistent presence of mold. As a staff member, I have witnessed firsthand the negative impact that mold in our school buildings has had on the health of both students and colleagues. Over the past several years of arguing with my administration over the mold in my school office, they have told me over and over that facilities visited, analyzed the leak and determined that this concern may be reoccurring and not a short-term fix. Due to potential concerns for both mine and the student's well-being resulting from the water issue, I was asked to move my room. It has been such an inconvenience since there are literally no other rooms that I have ended up sharing space with colleagues.

The mold growth within our school environment is not just a minor inconvenience; it is a serious health hazard. Many of my colleagues experience respiratory issues due to illnesses directly related to mold exposure, and often find it hard to focus or perform to the best of our abilities because of constant physical discomfort. The lack of proper ventilation and the ongoing presence of mold spores in classrooms and hallways has created an environment that is neither conducive to learning nor conducive to working in a safe, healthy environment. Why do school systems not think this is a real issue?

This bill is vital for our well-being, as it calls for necessary action to ensure that all school buildings are inspected, remediated, and maintained in a manner that eliminates mold and other hazardous conditions. No student or educator should have to choose between their health and their education or work.

I urge the committee to issue a favorable report of Senate Bill 26 and ensure that all students and staff have access to safe, healthy, and mold-free environments where we can learn and work without fear for our health.

Thank you for your consideration and support.