



A Union of Professionals
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**Written Testimony for the Maryland Senate Finance Committee
SB 26 - Labor and Employment – Occupational Safety and Health – Revisions
(Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)
January 29, 2025**

SUPPORT

Chair Beidle and members of the committee, on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland, which represents thousands of public employees across the state, we support SB 26 because it will provide long-overdue protections to public employees by addressing critical gaps in workplace safety and it will help ensure that public bodies are held to the same safety and health standards as private employers.

By modernizing Maryland’s Occupational Safety and Health Act, SB 26 will ensure oversight and enforcement for workplace safety in public-sector workplaces. It will institute regular workplace inspections, require public bodies to report violations, and establish penalties for non-compliance.

Moreover, by expanding the definition of “place of employment” to include fieldwork locations and driving routes, this bill acknowledges the evolving nature of work for public employees.

For too long, public employers have been exempt from penalties that hold private-sector employers accountable. This disparity has left many workplace hazards unaddressed and public workers vulnerable.

Public employees are the backbone of our state, providing critical services that sustain our communities, schools, and government functions. SB 26 ensures these workers are afforded the same level of safety and respect as those in the private sector.

AFT-MD respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 26 to help create safer workplaces for Maryland’s public employees. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

