



# METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL

## AFL-CIO Unions

**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**

Chairwoman and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of **SB26- Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety & Health - Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)**. My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO—our central labor council represents over 100 affiliated local unions and close to 80,000 proud union members in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard counties; and Baltimore City.

For far too long, workers like our dedicated public employees have had to work in conditions that are both unsafe and unhealthy. Many times, the incidents and conditions that create unsafe workplaces are foreseeable and preventable. Each year, hundreds of thousands of workers are killed and millions more suffer injury or illness because of their jobs. In 2022, 80 workers died on the job in Maryland, with 22 of those tragic deaths being attributable to an assault or other act of violence.<sup>1</sup>

We have recently mourned the loss of hardworking public employees at both the state and local level, including our late brother Davis Martinez of the Department of Parole & Probation and Baltimore City Department of Public Works brothers Ronald Silver II and Timothy Cartwell. These incidents and tragedies not only have a direct impact on the individual(s) harmed, but it also has indirect impacts on coworkers, the community, and families. The impact of workplace hazards is extensive: Workers and their families pay with their lives and livelihoods. Workplace injuries and illnesses shift costs from employers to workers and can limit working people's opportunities and quality of life for decades.

The Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act ensures that our dedicated public employees can leave home for their shifts each day with the expectation that they are able to return home safely to their families. This important legislation also provides guidance and sets a standard for Maryland's municipalities and counties, allowing the state to be a leader in the development of good job policy.

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<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO Death on the Job: Toll of Neglect 2024 Report*



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The act accomplishes our shared goals in a multitude of ways including the establishment of a Public Employee Safety and Health Unit within the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health administration (MOSH) to administer and enforce Maryland's workplace safety and health laws for public employees.

This component holds the employer accountable to standards and laws that are designed to reinforce the workplace safety is and should always be the top priority of the employer.

SB 26 also requires public employers to keep an accurate record of work-related deaths, injuries, and illnesses and submit this data to the Commissioner of Labor on a quarterly basis. A data driven approach enables employers and workers the ability to analyze trends and other data sets to help mitigate incidents and improve safety standards in the workplace.

Unions are fighting for good and safe jobs for everyone. Winning strong standards in the halls of government raises the standards of practice on the shop floor. We are committed to protecting and making real our fundamental right to a safe job and must advocate for a strong, inclusive workplace safety agenda to ensure all people have the opportunity for a better life.

I urge the committee to issue a favorable report of Senate Bill 26.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney L. Jenkins, President