

**Favorable  
Senate Bill 417  
Labor and Employment - Mandatory Meetings on Religious or Political  
Matters - Employee Attendance and Participation  
(Maryland Worker Freedom Act)**

**Finance Committee  
February 18, 2026**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 417. This legislation would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees or applicants who decline to attend meetings or receive communications concerning the employer's views on religious or political matters. It authorizes employees to file complaints for violations with the Commissioner of Labor and Industry.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Religious and political pressure in the workplace is a growing problem that affects workers from all walks of life and across the political spectrum. 12 states- Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Vermont- have enacted laws intended to restrict or ban mandatory meetings on religious or political matters in the face of growing threats and intimidation. Seante Bill 417 aims to protect workers from coercion, intimidation, privacy infringement, misinformation, and punitive practices. This law will empower workers to opt out of unwelcome political and religion speech by protecting them from retaliation and financial harm.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 417.**