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BILL: HB 1492
TITLE: Collective Bargaining – Public Employees – Revocation of Certification
and School and Library Employees’ Right to Strike
DATE: March 11, 2026
POSITION: Unfavorable
COMMITTEE: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 1492.

This legislation would allow for certificated and noncertificated public school and library system employees, and employer organizations the right to engage in a strike and prohibit public school and public library employers from taking certain actions against employees who participate. This would also repeal the authority of the Public Employee Relations Board to deny or revoke an employee organization’s certification as exclusive representative of public employees in State and local government under certain circumstances; and generally relates to collective bargaining for public employees.

Maryland’s educators are the backbone of our public school systems. Maryland also has a long history of productive and collaborative collective bargaining between local school systems and employee organizations. The current framework includes well-established negotiation, mediation, and appeals processes that have allowed disputes to be resolved while maintaining continuity of instruction for students.

Allowing teachers to strike would represent a **major shift in Maryland public policy** and could significantly disrupt this balanced and well-functioning labor framework.

While we deeply value educators and the essential role they play in our schools, we have serious concerns about the potential consequences of allowing teacher strikes, particularly for students and families.

Teacher strikes can significantly disrupt the academic calendar and student learning.

Maryland law requires 180 days of instructional time, and local school systems are already responsible for ensuring that an increasing number of curriculum requirements are met within that timeframe. Lost instructional time is difficult to recover, particularly when strikes extend beyond a few days. Nationally, while approximately 90% of teacher strikes last fewer than 10 days, some have lasted far longer. The longest strike in U.S. history occurred in Illinois in 1987 and lasted 156 school days. More recently Hawaii teachers struck for 20 days in 2001 and Chicago Public Schools teachers struck for 11 days in 2019

Even shorter disruptions can have lasting academic consequences. Research from the Brookings Institution found that longer teacher strikes are associated with statistically significant declines in student achievement—roughly three to five percent of a typical year’s academic growth, with impacts extending into the following school year. ([Brookings. The resurgence and impacts of teacher strikes](#))

Students approaching graduation, college admissions, or standardized testing are particularly vulnerable to these disruptions. The impact is often greatest for students who already face academic challenges.

School closures due to strikes can disproportionately affect students who rely heavily on school-based services. Schools provide far more than classroom instruction. When schools close, students may lose access to:

- School meals
- Special education supports
- Counseling and mental health services
- Safe supervision during the school day

For many vulnerable students, these supports are essential to their well-being and ability to succeed academically.

Teacher strikes can also create significant challenges for families. When schools close unexpectedly, parents may need to miss work, arrange emergency childcare, and adjust work schedules or employment responsibilities. Research examining prolonged teacher strikes in Argentina found that when strikes lasted longer than 10 days, many parents were forced to miss work or leave the workforce temporarily. The study found that ten days of strike-related school closures resulted in an average decline of about 3% in monthly labor earnings for affected households. ([Journal Article - The effect of teacher strikes on parents](#))

Unlike private sector employers, school systems operate within fixed public budgets approved by state and local governments. ***Maryland school districts do not have independent taxing authority and cannot simply raise revenue to meet demands during labor disputes.*** Strikes may create emergency situations that pressure governments to make short-term financial decisions that may not be sustainable in the long term. This dynamic can disrupt careful budgeting processes and complicate long-term fiscal planning for both school systems and local governments.

Maryland has made historic investments in the teaching profession through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, including:

- Significant salary increases
- Career ladder opportunities
- Expanded professional development
- Additional staffing supports in community schools

In many districts, these improvements have also benefited other school staff through “me-too” contracts that mirror changes in the larger teacher union contracts. This has helped strengthen the broader school workforce and create healthier school environments, but has been a fiscal obligation not anticipated by the State Legislature, nor funded with any additional State funding. However, these investments reflect Maryland’s commitment to elevating the teaching profession and supporting educators.

Maryland’s educators are the backbone of our public school systems, and we remain committed to supporting them through strong partnerships and fair collective bargaining.

However, because education is an **essential public service**, allowing teacher strikes would create significant risks for students, families, and communities. We believe Maryland’s longstanding collaborative bargaining framework has served the state well, and we encourage policymakers to continue focusing on solutions that support educators while keeping students at the center of every decision.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1492 and respectfully requests an **unfavorable** committee report.