



February 17, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells
Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 473 – Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Dear Chair Wells and Committee Members:

Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America (GBDSA) respectfully submits this letter of support for HB 473 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size. This bill would allow maximum class sizes to be included in collective bargaining negotiations, an area that is explicitly prohibited under current law.

As State, county, and local governments are dealing with budget shortfalls, it is likely Maryland public school students will bear the brunt of the cuts, with Baltimore County alone facing nearly [\\$18 million](#) in cuts in the coming fiscal year. While the workers and teachers of GBDSA recognize the fiscal situation in Maryland, we refuse to let our students, teachers, and educational support staff be the targets of this austerity. It is clear that the General Assembly is taking steps to avoid that outcome, but **it is working people in the community who are best equipped to understand the detrimental outcomes of large class sizes, and to advocate for their children and each other**. That is why it is so essential that unions, as representatives of these workers, are able to consider class size in their negotiations. [We have seen this strategy work](#), with an Oregon teachers union negotiating special education caseloads caps and help for teachers with particularly large classes.

Smaller class sizes are one of the most effective ways to [improve educational outcomes](#). When educators have fewer students in each classroom, they are better able to provide individualized attention, identify learning challenges early, and build meaningful relationships that support students' academic and emotional development. Reducing class sizes is also a matter of educational equity. Overcrowded classrooms are most common in schools serving working-class families and communities of color. By removing the prohibition on negotiating class size limits, **the legislature will empower education workers to combat longstanding disparities in their communities**. Furthermore, manageable class sizes improve working conditions for educators.

Excessive workloads contribute to burnout, high turnover, and staffing shortages, exacerbating the problems our schools already face, while ultimately costing the states, counties, and local governments more in restaffing and training costs. Promoting smaller classes not only supports students but also strengthens the teaching profession and improves long-term stability in our schools.

For these reasons, GBDSA supports HB 473, and requests a favorable vote by the committee. If you have any questions please reach out to baltimoredsa@gbdsa.org.

In Solidarity,
Juli O'Hanian
GBDSA Steering Committee