

**Favorable
House Bill 1492
Collective Bargaining - Public Employees - Revocation of Certification and
School and Library Employees' Right to Strike**

**Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
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**Paul Lemle
MSEA President**

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 1492. This legislation would establish that certain certificated and noncertificated public school employees, library system employees, and employer organizations have the right to engage in a strike; prohibit public school and public library employers from taking certain actions against public school and public library employees who support or participate in a strike; and 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.

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).

The International Labour Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency founded in 1919, considers the right of workers to strike a fundamental human right. Twelve states in the country—Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Vermont—believed that right extends to educators by expressly allowing school staff strikes. This is a right that public educators in other states have and that private employees have.

Strikes are an important tool of last resort to better level the playing field to get better support for kids and schools. The National Bureau of Economic Research examined 772 strikes, which often focused on expanded student supports, improved



learning and working conditions, appropriate salaries and benefits, and common good demands such as addressing social justice or housing issues.¹ When strikes have occurred, they have often resulted in sustained increases in per-pupil spending, smaller class sizes, increased planning time, safer buildings, more green spaces, better informed district policies and procedures, increased local and state funding, better pay and benefits, and additional permanent staff, including nurses, social workers, librarians, crisis response, and mental health services specialists.²

Nine out of 10 strikes in the United States last fewer than 10 days- with most strikes lasting fewer than five days and a median duration of two days. Research has demonstrated that work stoppages did not affect student achievement in the five years following a strike.³

Teacher strikes have enjoyed strong support from parents, and in many cases, parents have joined educators on picket lines. According to the Phi Delta Kappan (PDK) Poll of the Public's Attitudes Towards Public Schools, 84% of parents would support a strike for more public-school funding and greater teacher decision making power in district academic policies.⁴ And 74% of parents stated that they would support a strike for higher educator pay. This strong support illustrates that strikes are not a partisan issue; when the United Auto Workers struck in 2023, both then-President Joe Biden and then-Senator J.D. Vance visited workers on the picket line to show their support.

Strikes are not our goal. At the same time, the power to strike sends an important message in leveling the playing field, standing up for workers, and giving communities a way to rally around the needs of its schools. The time is now to pass this bill and protect the right to strike.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 1492.

¹ Ibid.

² Hartley, Margaret. "Study: Teacher Strikes Are Effective in Increasing Wages, Working Conditions." *University at Albany*, 2024, www.albany.edu/news-center/news/2024-study-teacher-strikes-are-effective-increasing-wages-working-conditions.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Walker, Tim. "Poll: Parents Continue to Stand beside Educators in Fight for Funding | NEA." *Www.nea.org*, 7 Aug. 2019, www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/parents-support-teacher-strikes.