

**Favorable
House Bill 473
Education- Collective Bargaining- Certificated Employees-Class Size**

**Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 17, 2026**

**Paul Lemle
President**

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 473, legislation that removes negotiations related to class size—specifically the maximum number of students assigned to a class—as a prohibited subject of bargaining between boards of education and exclusive bargaining representatives.

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).

Class size matters. It matters to students. It matters to classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. It matters when it comes to managing classrooms and addressing student discipline. It matters in the development of relationships with students and their families. It is a huge factor in working and learning conditions, and yet current Maryland law prohibits discussion at the bargaining table of the maximum number of students in a class.

Currently, Maryland is one of only nine states – including Alaska, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin - where the maximum number of students in a class is an illegal subject of bargaining. As an illegal subject, educators cannot bring it up when negotiating contracts with the local board of education, even though this has been a top concern for educators and parents, especially as it impacts the individualized attention educators can provide to

students. School systems and educators need specific solutions to their specific problems. By removing the maximum number of students in a class as a prohibited subject of bargaining, House Bill 473 creates the most prudent path forward allowing educators and school systems the flexibility to discuss these issues together. It allows educators to work with local boards of education on solutions that work best for the needs of their districts.

A recent MSEA survey found that 92% of Maryland educators support legislation to make this topic a legal subject of bargaining. 61% of Maryland educators said they would be somewhat or much more likely to stay in the profession if class sizes could be lowered. The survey found that educators felt that if class sizes were reduced, they would be able to give students more individualized attention and would be able to build stronger relationships with students.

To better serve our students and to retain educators, we must allow our educators to have a tool that gives them a stronger voice for themselves and our students. Removing the prohibition on bargaining the maximum number of students in a class will allow educators and district leaders the ability to engage in discussions and hopefully come to agreement on creative solutions that best serve students.

We strongly urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 473.