



February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Bill: HB 473: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**

**Position: Favorable with Amendment**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association (MSHA) represents speech language pathologists and audiologists across Maryland. Collectively, we elevate and engage members to strive for excellence in serving those impacted by communication and related disorders through advocacy, equity, education, interprofessional collaboration, and leadership development.

We are writing in support of House Bill 473 with amendments. MSHA champions collective bargaining for class size in Maryland's public schools, but requests that language be added to include public school clinician caseloads. In Maryland, we have no caseload cap through state law nor are we allowed to force school districts to negotiate this topic. School districts cite the prohibition on negotiating class size as the justification for denying negotiating caseload size for public school clinicians; therefore, specific language on caseload size should be added to HB 473. Please see examples of caseload cap state laws and collective bargaining agreements below.

State / LEA	Caseload Cap	Legal/Contractual Source
California	55 (School-age) / 40 (Preschool)	CA Ed Code § 56363.3
Illinois	60	105 ILCS 5/14-6.03
West Virginia	50	WV BE Policy 2419
New York City	65	UFT/DOE Contract
Alabama	30* (Highly Protective)	AL Admin. Code § 290-8-9-.10

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This list is in no way exhaustive, and we are happy to engage further with this topic crucial for maintaining high quality therapy services. Some Maryland school districts, such as Baltimore City and Montgomery County, have soft language for caseload recommendations in their collective bargaining agreements, but this is not enforceable or required. In recent years, speech-language pathologists from Baltimore County have repeatedly reached out to our Association, the State Board, and local news organizations after their caseloads were increased far beyond best practices due to continued staff shortages. Maryland must ensure that clinicians have the right to collectively bargain with public school systems to protect our ability to provide consistent high quality service to all of Maryland's students.

For these reasons, the Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association supports House Bill 473 with Amendments.

Thank you,

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