

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1078  
Public Safety - Education - Firearm Funding  
(No Funding for Firearms Act)**

**House Appropriations Committee  
February 27, 2020  
1:00 PM**

**Doug Prouty  
MSEA Vice President**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1078, which clearly prohibits the spending of any money to provide a teacher with a firearm as a part of that teacher's professional responsibilities.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As educators, we believe one of our most sacred duties is to provide safe and secure public schools for every one of our children. We must do everything we can to reduce the possibility of any gunfire in schools and concentrate on ways to keep additional guns off school property and ensure the safety of children and school employees. The memories of the children and educators we have lost are a haunting reminder of the importance of keeping our schools safe. The evidence is clear, we don't need more guns on school property, we need fewer.

As the country and our state debates elements of safe schools, the federal government has freed up federal resources that would allow school districts to spend money to arm teachers. This is the wrong policy, and clearly prohibiting it is, sadly, necessary. Instead of arming teachers with weapons, we need to spend local, state, and federal resources on preventive measures. We must dramatically expand our investment in mental health services. Proper diagnosis can and often does start in our schools, yet we continue to provide inadequate funding for school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists. We must also begin investing in proven solutions—such as restorative justice practices, community schools, school-based mental health, trauma-informed care—that seek to transform school climate and community. Luckily, many of these investments are included in HB 1300, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Steps such as these are proven methods of keeping our campuses and classrooms safe. Increasing the number of firearms on campus and expanding who may possess them is not a proven technique.

**MSEA urges a favorable report for House Bill 1078.**