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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 1515**

**TITLE:**               Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans - Establishment

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate P. Young

**COMMITTEE:**      Health and Government Operations

**POSITION:**        **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             March 11, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1515 – Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans – Establishment. This legislation establishes a matching grant program that awards funding to local nonprofit organizations for certain purposes.

Our veterans and service members are confronted with a tragic dilemma. While many have endured trauma that necessitates the use of behavioral health services, those services are often unaffordable for those that need them the most. The potential long-term effects of allowing trauma to go untreated are well known – the annual number of veteran suicides in the United States climbed to 6,139 in 2017, a 6% increase since 2005. It is clear that state and local governments must do more to treat mental health among service members and veterans with the urgency it warrants. Baltimore County understands the urgent need for this funding as it boasts one of the highest veteran populations in the State. HB 1515 would provide assistance by establishing a matching grant program that awards funds to nonprofits which make behavioral health services accessible to veterans and service members who otherwise cannot afford them.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1515. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, 443-900-6582.