



February 26, 2020

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information on House Bill 1292 - Public Schools – Special Education Classrooms – Use of Recording Devices.

Dear Chairman Kaiser:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is a nationally recognized “Blue Ribbon School of Excellence,” leading the charge in innovative education for children, adolescents and young adults with a wide range of learning, emotional, physical, neurological and developmental disabilities.

We recognize the uniqueness of each student and it is our mission to enable students to reach their potential academically, socially and behaviorally, with the ultimate goal of nurturing their independence now and in the future. We are committed to protecting our children and ensuring that they are in a safe environment to learn and grow.

Currently, there is no federal law expressly prohibiting or requiring cameras in special education classrooms and there is a variance among states. Only three states have passed legislation addressing the use of cameras in special education classrooms. Many other states have pursued legislation unsuccessfully or have legislation currently pending, **including HB 1292 before your committee today.**

Kennedy Krieger believes that technical, privacy, financial, and safety considerations must be thoughtfully reviewed in exploring this legislation.

Technical: Quality Issues; Camera Operation; Camera Coverage Area; Length of Time of Camera Operation; Classroom Type; Monitoring of Camera Footage

Privacy: Student Privacy; School Staff Privacy; Video Monitoring and Access; Redaction; Retention and Storage

Safety: School Climate; School Staff Behavior; School Ability to Communicate Information

Financial: Cost of Equipment; Funding

Further data collection, monitoring, and review of the states with current laws is required to determine whether students in special education classrooms with cameras are safer because their classrooms are being recorded. Stakeholders should look at overall cost to local educational agencies and states. It is important that LEAs and states establish clear guidelines, if cameras will be installed in special education classrooms. Stakeholders should also consider whether resources are better spent on training school staff in PBIS and trauma-informed practices for all students as well as using the funding for increasing the number of mental health related service providers available to students.

Kennedy Krieger recognizes this as a dynamic issue and welcomes the opportunity to participate in further dialogue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley L. Schlaggar".

Bradley L. Schlaggar, MD, PhD
President and CEO