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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

Chair
Early Childhood Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

Thank you for your consideration of:

HB 1235 - Maryland Center for School Safety - School Employee Injury Reporting and Study

Among the many concerns we have with education, one of them is attracting and keeping the best teachers to Maryland schools. There are very few things that are more likely to discourage going into or staying in the profession than a feeling of personal vulnerability suggested by physical violence against teachers.

We hear numerous stories about students, parents, and even other staff members assaulting people working at our schools. We would surely like to develop strategies to stop this. The difficulty is that the stories are anecdotal and singular, shown on sensational newscasts, in social media posts, and even in political communications. I believe we may have a problem here, but as one who values sound statistical evidence I am sure that we need to gather data first. We need to see if there is a pervasive problem and gather data about such a problem if it does indeed exist. This will allow a meaningful and well considered strategy to emerge.

Fortunately, we have a resource to accomplish just such a gathering of data, as well as interpreting it and finding potential solutions. The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) is our agency to work toward ensuring our schools are safe. It has grown as the need to protect our school populations has become more acute in light of school shootings around the nation and here in Maryland. But school safety is more than just protecting us from these sensational disasters. Making schools safe for personnel there is certainly part of that

This bill, then, sets in motion a gathering of data about injuries to school staff, the analysis of that data, and the formulation of a plan of action based on that data. The MCSS is set up to do all three of these. They only need us add this to the charge of their tasks. I urge a favorable evaluation of this legislation. We could then hope to improve school safety and work conditions for the educators in our state.

Thank you

Eric Ebersole