

Testimony for the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
HB 522 - Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Prohibited Conduct  
March 30, 2021

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

Dear Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I respectfully oppose HB 522. The current version of HB 522 contains several problematic provisions and I urge the committee to take action in a future legislative session to get police out of schools and adopt a new, transformative vision for school safety in Maryland.

I stand with the Maryland Coalition for Justice & Police Accountability (MCJPA) in their findings that school police do not keep students and educators safe, police presence in schools increases student arrests for minor offenses like disorderly conduct, Black and Latinx students are disproportionately impacted by school policing, and alternative strategies like restorative approaches and trauma-informed practices can effectively keep students safe.

State law should encourage districts to shift away from reliance police presence in schools; instead, HB 522 cements and expands the role of school policing in Maryland schools. As a PGCPS graduate, I know firsthand that Black and Latinx students will bear the brunt of the overreliance on police presence. Ultimately, to keep all students safe, districts should shift away relying on on-site police and should instead invest in student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches – all of which have been shown to meaningfully improve student behavior and school safety. The reasons are clear, and well-supported.

Thank you,

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