



Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 2, 2022

**Bill: House Bill 293 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - 9-8-8 Trust Fund**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic well-being of students and families across the state.

We support this bill because throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an increased number of students experiencing crisis. It is imperative that these students and their families have access to crisis services when they need them. Creating the 9-8-8 system is an important step toward ensuring that Marylanders have quick access to crisis services in the same way the 9-1-1 system connects Marylanders to emergency services. In order for 9-8-8 to be effective, we will need to continue to invest in our behavioral health crisis system. Creating the 9-8-8 trust fund is a necessary step towards ensuring funding for a comprehensive behavioral health crisis system.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 293. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Scott Tiffin at [stiffin@policypartners.net](mailto:stiffin@policypartners.net) or (443) 350-1325.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association