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February 22, 2022

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: HB 725 Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, urges the Committee to provide a **favorable report on HB 725**.

HB 725 establishes a Therapeutic Child Care Program in Maryland that will provide early intervention, specialized care and early childhood education to children under six (6) years old with developmental delays or physical disabilities.

Learning and development occur at the fastest rate during a child's preschool years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), developmental disabilities affect about 15% of children in the United States. Early intervention is forward looking and does much more than provide immediate benefits during the child's early developmental years. Early intervention programs significantly increase the child's ability to integrate into future social environments, including school, the community, and the workforce.

A 2018 study by the RAND Corporation found that Early Childhood Intervention Programs provide short- and long-term benefits in multiple domains including: improved mental health; improved physical health; decrease in crime; increased employment and earnings in adulthood; more years of schooling and better attendance; and more stable and functional families when they become adults.

The 2018 RAND study also found benefit-cost ratios in the range of \$2 to \$4 for every dollar spent in the program, with even higher ratios possible in the health care domain.

We urge the Committee to provide a **Favorable report on HB 725**. Investing money in Maryland's children now will provide significant payback and reward in both the short-term and long-term.

For these and other reasons, the MPA urges you to **SUPPORT HB 725**.

Please feel free to contact MPA's Executive Director Stefanie Reeves at exec@marylandpsychology.org if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Linda McGhee

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., JD
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs