



Bill: **Senate Bill 551 - Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)**

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, 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 the establishment of the Service Year Option Program as a path to career readiness for Maryland residents. As school psychologists, we serve many diverse learners who need opportunities to build upon their own strengths in order to thrive in the workforce. Many times, they are limited by a lack of options to engage in vocational training upon graduation from high school. They need additional support that would be provided by the program, including professional development, mentoring, and job training. The Maryland School Psychologists' Association recognizes the need for more opportunities for our diverse learners and other students who may need additional support upon graduation to meet their career goals.

SB 551 would allow for all of Maryland's students to have access to opportunities to expand their career readiness beyond graduation from public schools and build their skills as members of Maryland's workforce. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Committee Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association.