



February 3, 2023

Bill: HB 271- 9-8-8 Trust Fund - Funding

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 wellbeing of students and families across the state. School psychologists provide comprehensive psychological services to Maryland's students, including counseling, consultation and assessment. We are acutely aware of the significant behavioral health needs of many of our students and their families. It is essential that as part of Maryland's system for addressing these needs we have in place an effective crisis response system. The newly established national 9-8-8 crisis line is an essential element in that system.

The Maryland School Psychologists' Association asks that the committee vote in favor of adequately funding this crisis hotline and the associated funding for the coordination and delivery of crises services for those experiencing behavioral health issues. Hotlines often serve as a frontline resource for people experiencing suicidality and other behavioral health crises. Not only do they work to lessen the immediacy of the crisis, but hotlines often serve as entry points into the world of behavioral health services, by providing those in crisis with resources they might not otherwise have thought to access. It is particularly important that this new system receive adequate funding as it becomes established in Maryland.

MSPA therefore urges you to favorably report on HB 271 to ensure adequate funding for this crisis hotline. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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School Psychologist
Legislative Committee Chair, Maryland School Psychologists' Association