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Chair

Bill Number: House Bill 488

Position: Letter of Information

Title: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

Committee: House Appropriations Committee and Ways & Means Committee

Hearing Date: February 15, 2023

Bill Summary:

House Bill 488 expands the purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools. It requires the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

Information:

House Bill 488 would expand the “eligible fields of employment” for this program to specifically include the following positions:

“(D) “MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, RESOURCE PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOLOGIST COORDINATOR, SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORKER SUPERVISOR, OR MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR.”

This addition clarifies the Legislature’s intent for which positions to include in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program. In addition, it will expand the eligibility for this specific group to allow those now eligible to have graduated from “any accredited college or university.” Requirements for those currently eligible for this program is limited to those who received their graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from a college or university in the State of Maryland.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss the proposed bill and information provided here. Please contact Mr. Al Dorsett, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance at al.dorsett@maryland.gov, for more information.