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January 19, 2024

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Bill: House Bill 204 – Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, is writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 204 - Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training, which will result in a substantial boost in critically important education to train coaches to recognize indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress for students who participate in athletic programs in Maryland.

Developing guidelines for coaches to recognize the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students who participate in athletic programs in Maryland would be a critical addition to the role that coaches play in their student athlete's lives. Coaches work closely with student athletes and can spend upwards of 10 hours a week with select groups of student athletes, which positions them well to notice changes in mental health and behavior. Guidelines and the subsequent training for coaches can be a valuable avenue for early identification for student athletes who could benefit from referral to life-saving mental health services. We urge that HB 204 receive a favorable report.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 204. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of MPA's Legislative Committee, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Corrado, PsyD

Stephanie Wolf, JD, PhD

**President, MPA**

**Chair, MPA Legislative Committee**

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