

FAVORABLE
House Bill 416
Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements

Ways and Means Committee
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Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 416, which would direct the Maryland Center for School Safety to study the efficacy and impact of active shooter drills in schools, identify best practices, and develop content to make families aware of firearm storage laws in Maryland. It would also notify families of a scheduled drill and take measures to mitigate trauma resulting from active shooter drills.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

House Bill 416 establishes important guardrails to protect students and educators against the inherent distress caused by active shooter drills. Importantly, it also takes proactive measures to ensure families are aware of firearm safe storage practices and that school systems will have the data they need to guide policies and practices around active shooter drills or trainings.

These reasonable measures are carefully designed to protect students and educators from unnecessary mental harm that may arise from active shooter drills. Ninety-five percent of public schools in the U.S. utilize drill procedures for lockdowns, but research has not conclusively affirmed the value of these drills for prevention of school shootings or protecting individuals when a



school shooting does occur.¹ In light of these findings, it is important for communities, schools, and policymakers to evaluate the efficacy of these drills balanced against the anxiety and mental health issues that students and educators may incur as a result. House Bill 416 establishes a solid foundation to address and evaluate these issues.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 416.

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety, The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools: Time to rethink reactive school safety strategies (9/3/2020) (Updated 12/19/2021), https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-activeshooter-drills-inschools/?_gl=1*14llmou*_ga*ODkyNjY3NzM1LjE2NzYxNDE1OTk.*_ga_LT0FWV3EK3*MTY3NjE0NzZmOC4zLjAuMTY3NjE0NzZmOC4wLjAuMA.