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**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
HB 416 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements
February 7, 2024**

SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary and members of the Committee, AFT-Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 416, which addresses the crucial issue of active shooter drills and trainings in schools. We believe that the proposed legislation is a significant step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of students and school personnel.

The provisions outlined in the bill include the prohibition of active shooter drills or trainings' activities that may be traumatic for students or school personnel; live exercises with individuals role-playing as an active shooter or victim; and similar activities. The bill acknowledges the potential psychological impact of such actions during drills or trainings.

The requirement for local school systems to notify parents in advance of drills or trainings is a crucial component of this legislation. Communication with parents allows families to be informed and involved in the preparation process. Additionally, the mandated mental health follow-up for students and school personnel after such drills is a vital step towards addressing the potential emotional impact these exercises may have.

In addition, the collecting and reporting data on the effectiveness and psychological impact of the drills or trainings to the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), is a data-driven approach that will allow for improvements and development of best practices in active shooter safety drills. It demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based practices and best practices are identified.

This legislation is a crucial step to create a safer and supportive learning environment for our students and school personnel. Again, we ask for a favorable report on HB 416. Thank you.

