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Cecil and Harford Counties

DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Health and Government  
Operations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Health Occupations and  
Long Term Care

Public Health and  
Minority Health Disparities

Rules and Executive  
Nominations Committee

*Chair*

Harford County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB 1401 – State Department of Education – School Psychologist Recruitment Program**

**March 4, 2024**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

HB 1401 would establish a School Psychologist Recruitment Program in the Maryland State Department of Education to provide professional support to individuals who are, or seeking to become, school psychologists and seek to provide support to school psychologists from groups historically underrepresented among professional personnel in the state. The program would pay the certification fees for up to 100 individuals who are seeking to become certified school psychologists. MSDE will be the clearinghouse for this program.

It is vitally important that we work together to offer Maryland's children the psychological support they require by increasing the numbers of school psychologists. A 2021 study from the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a 500:1 ratio of students to school psychologists. The most recent data available in our state determined that the Maryland State average was a 1200:1 ratio—well below our target and therefore failing to meet the needs of our students.

I consider this bill to be a workforce development bill. My bill from 2019, **HB 844- Public Schools – School Psychologists – Reports**, formed a task force to study the scope of this challenge. That study found that in Maryland, job openings for school psychologists were available and school districts had money budgeted to pay for them, but a lack of candidates led to unacceptably low numbers of new hires. HB1401 will grow the school psychologist workforce by offering supports and incentives to those that are either already in the field or are training to become certified. This will provide our most

vulnerable students with the psychological services they require in order to succeed with their academic pursuits.

Passage of this bill would provide support for these qualified individuals that are so desperately needed when our children throughout the State of Maryland need accurate IEPs or access to services to address issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and bullying.

Maryland children deserve the best psychologists available, and HB1401 goes a long way to achieving that end.

HB1401 is cross-filed with SB499.

I respectfully ask for a FAVORABLE report from the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Teresa E. Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "R".

Delegate Teresa E. Reilly  
District 35A  
Cecil and Harford Counties