

HB0612 - Lifesavers Schools Program Written Testimony - Saan Rhyne

HB612 Written Testimony – Ways and Means Committee (2/12 at 1:00 PM)

Public Schools - Lifesaver Schools Program - Establishment

Baltimore County Student Councils

Saan Rhyne - Baltimore County High School Student

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Saan Rhyne and I am a student from Baltimore County. I write to you on behalf of students in Maryland to request a favorable report on House Bill 612.

Unfortunately, the mental wellbeing of students is a stigmatized topic that often goes overlooked in the school system, even though many students face mental health challenges. This bill is important because it seeks to establish a program within schools that actively promotes the dissemination of mental health education to students in addition to implementing opportunities in which students and staff can receive Service Learning and Professional Development hours, respectively. Schools are the ideal environment for intervention because they provide constant person-to-person contact that allows students and staff to form close and meaningful relationships. In 2021, 22% of students considered committing suicide while 10% actually did attempt to take their lives. This is a problem that needs to be solved to protect young lives. This bill seeks to recognize public schools that provide resources relevant to the mental health issues in the state of Maryland, which are invaluable additions to school communities that can save lives.

Accordingly, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB612 from the committee. Thank you for your time.