

Emily Noonan HB612 – Lifesavers Schools Program Written Testimony Outline

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

Public Schools - Lifesaver Schools Program - Establishment

Calvert Association of Student Councils, Maryland Association of Student Councils

Isabella Siracusano- Northern High School Student

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

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

I believe mental health services are important for schools to provide because many students struggle with stress, anxiety, depression, and the idea of suicide. A study done in 2024 from the CDC states that 20.4% of all students have seriously considered suicide. This study also states that in 2021 suicide was the third leading cause of death among U.S. highschool students (age 14-18) with 1,952 suicide deaths in one year. Without granting students help, or giving them access to certain resources, these numbers will continue to rise throughout the state, and ultimately, the country.

One of the main values of the Maryland Board of Education (as shown on the website) is, “Transformation: We will pursue best-in-class outcomes through bold, impactful actions to **ensure** that **every student** has the **tools, resources, support**, and opportunities **they need** to thrive.” So, why aren’t these resources being provided to these students that truly need them? Why aren’t we determined to help ALL students?

Supporting students' mental well-being is vital to their success because without supporting them, how are they supposed to succeed in the world? If a student no longer has their life, or no longer feels happy in life, how are they supposed to become whoever they want to be? As members of the Maryland Board of Education, you must see what impact these resources will provide for students; the future leaders of the world.

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