

To: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Angela Kimball, Chief Advocacy Officer, Inseparable

Date: February 16, 2026

Re: Written Testimony in Support of SB 238 - School Psychologist Interstate Compact

On behalf of Inseparable, a national mental health policy and advocacy organization focused on improving youth mental health outcomes and strengthening the behavioral health workforce, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony **in support of Senate Bill 238**.

SB 238 would help address Maryland's shortage of school psychologists by authorizing the state to join the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists. An interstate compact is a formal agreement among participating states that allows qualified, licensed professionals to practice across state lines while preserving each state's authority over licensure standards, scope of practice, and discipline. Compacts reduce duplicative licensing barriers without lowering professional standards, helping states respond more effectively to workforce shortages.

Maryland, like many states, faces a significant shortage of school psychologists. The most recent data indicates a ratio of one school psychologist for every 1,037 students - more than double the recommended ratio of one for every 500 students. As a result, many practitioners carry overwhelming caseloads and often split their time across multiple schools each day. These constraints severely limit the time school psychologists can spend supporting students amid rising rates of anxiety, trauma, learning challenges, and behavioral concerns.

SB 238 offers a practical, targeted solution. By recognizing existing credentials from other compact states, Maryland can enable qualified school psychologists to begin working more quickly, reducing delays caused by lengthy and duplicative licensure processes. Importantly, the compact maintains Maryland's full authority over professional standards and disciplinary actions while improving licensure portability.

Joining the compact could also help Maryland recruit and retain a more diverse school psychology workforce. Research consistently shows that diverse school staff strengthen student support, improve equity, and reduce disparities in outcomes. Yet the school psychologist workforce remains disproportionately white, even as Maryland's student population grows increasingly diverse and Black youth, in particular, face sharply rising mental

health risks, including increased suicide rates. Expanding access to a broader pool of qualified professionals can help schools better meet the needs of all students.

The compact is especially beneficial for highly mobile professionals, including military spouses, who often relocate every two to three years and are forced to repeatedly restart the licensing process. Other states that have already joined report no direct fiscal impact.

SB 238 strengthens Maryland's ability to recruit, retain, and diversify its school psychologist workforce while ensuring students receive timely, high-quality mental health services. For these reasons, **Inseparable respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 238.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela Kimball". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Angela Kimball
Chief Advocacy Officer