



February 18, 2026

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

SB 238 - School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 238 - School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact.

This bill would establish a school psychologist multistate license, making it easier for school psychologists from out of state to work in Maryland. This flexibility is critical to address workforce shortages in the state.

Maryland faces a severe behavioral health shortage. A 2024 report commissioned by the Maryland Health Care Commission concluded that the state was lacking 32,800 behavioral health professionals that would be needed by 2028 to address our behavioral health challenges. This included an estimated shortage of 1,060 psychologists. Indeed, the report recommends over \$135 million in investments to address these shortages across professions through apprenticeships, fellowships, and other grants.¹ While these investments are needed, adopting more flexible licensure policies is a workforce strategy that would not require the state to allocate public funds.

Maryland also faces a shortage specifically of school psychologists. It is recommended that school systems employ one school psychologist for every 500 students, but Maryland has less than half the workforce needed to meet the standard. Maryland also lags our neighbors in Pennsylvania and Delaware.² This shortage delays important psychological evaluations for children and exacerbates educational difficulties.

SB 238 is a modest proposal to create a more flexible license for school psychologists that would apply across all states who join the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact. This policy would allow school psychologists in other states to practice in all compact states without obtaining separate licenses and would facilitate mobility of school psychologists. This would help expand the pool of available professionals for Maryland’s schools and improve access to these critical services for Maryland children.

SB 238 makes it easier for behavioral health professionals in other states to work in Maryland and help meet our children’s needs. **We urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support SB 238.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

References:

¹ Maryland Health Care Commission. *Investing in Maryland’s Behavioral Health Talent*. October 2024. Available at: https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md_bh_workforce_rpt_SB283.pdf

² National Association of School Psychologists. State Shortages Data Dashboard accessed February 2026. Available at: <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/state-shortages-data-dashboard>