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February 6, 2026

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 447 – Child Abuse and Neglect – Disclosure of Reports and Records

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to **report favorably on SB 447.**

The MPA recognizes the profound, wide-ranging, immediate and long-lasting negative effects experienced by children who have suffered abuse and/or been neglected. These include but are not limited to negative impacts on physical development and health (compromised immune systems leading to the development of chronic diseases and a shortened life span), psychological, behavioral, and cognitive well-being (alters brain function by damaging the development of the architecture of the brain), academic performance and achievement, and social relationships, to name a few. They are well documented in a multitude of research. Perhaps the most well-known is the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente. The results of these studies were released in a widely known and accepted report in 2005.

With this information in mind, it appears that the goal of this legislation is to help ensure that those who have responsibility for overseeing the health and well-being of children are provided with information that can be critical to their mission of fostering the health and well-being of the children in their care or under their supervision. The bill allows for the department of Human Services to disclose information, while providing for the safety of individual's who might be harmed, including the individual making the report, to the administrator of child care facilities, individual's involved in the provision of youth sports programs, and the administrator or another appropriate representative of any organization that provides adult supervision or care of children.

The MPA, recognizes the importance of providing safe and healthy environments in which children can thrive. In some instances, alerting those responsible for the supervision and/or care of children would benefit from knowing that a child in their care/supervision might be experiencing a significant set of stressors affecting many aspects of their life. In those instances, these individuals might then be able to interact with this group of children from a trauma-informed perspective, which could prevent secondary traumatization of this incredibly vulnerable group of children. Additionally, it would allow administrators of these programs to be aware of and take appropriate steps to address an adult staff member who has been involved in the abuse or neglect of children.

The MPA applauds the Committee for its ongoing willingness to consider strengthening support that the community might be able to provide to children facing abuse and/or neglect, therefore, the **Maryland Psychological Association supports SB 447 and urges a favorable Committee Report.**

If we can be of any further assistance as the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D. at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
President

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs