



February 19, 2020

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support– SB 637: Children - Therapeutic Nursery Program - Funding

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports Senate Bill 637 (SB 637). The goal of therapeutic nursery programs is to provide early interventions for youth with developmental delays. Intensive early interventions are critical, especially for the developmentally delayed population. These programs seek to address common problems in these children including attention, socialization, and language deficits in a structured school setting. Studies have shown that the earlier these interventions can begin, the greater their effect.

Currently, services for many of these toddlers are offered via programs such as Infants and Toddlers or Child Find if the family is knowledgeable of and capable enough to identify and participate in such services. These children might continue to receive services to some extent while in pre-school programs such as Head Start, but there are limitations to the services offered. The benefit of Therapeutic Nursery Program envisioned under SB 637 is that services can be integrated in the school setting thus providing optimal access to early intervention services that allow for the best treatment outcome."

For all the reasons stated above, MPS asks the committee for a favorable report on SB 637. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society