

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2020

Testimony in Support of SB896 - Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment

Position: Favorable with Amendments

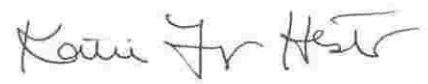
Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB896. Currently, health providers who provide services in an educational setting are not certified under Health Occupations, but are instead certified under Education. As a result, educational professionals have been tasked with creating guidelines for what are primarily health services roles. This has led to discrepancies in guidance, resources, and providers from one school or jurisdiction to another.

This bill creates a commission to resolve those differences, and to make sure guidance counselors, school psychologists, pupil personnel, and health services providers have clear guidelines and scopes of practice within our educational system. As we contemplate additional resources for behavioral health care in relation to educational settings, it is important that we know those resources are going where we intend them to. This legislation will ensure that these discrepancies are resolved, giving the system more clarity and increasing the effectiveness of our investments in our hardworking school health service providers throughout Maryland.

I have included a sponsor amendment with the bill that narrows the scope of the bill to solely address treatments by pupil services programs, as defined in . There are also slight changes in the membership of the commission, as well as more specific guidance on the Commission's role. With this bill, we can provide a uniform standard of guidance and scope of practice for the health providers working to improve the mental health and well-being of Maryland students. **I respectfully request a favorable report for SB896.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "H".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Carroll Counties