



**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE  
HOUSE BILL 1022: EDUCATION – ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS – REPORTING  
REQUIREMENTS**

**FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE COUNCIL OF PARENT ATTORNEYS AND  
ADVOCATES (COPAA)**

**Selene Almazan, Esq. Legal Director, COPAA**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

COPAA is a national organization of parents, advocates and attorneys dedicated to protecting the civil and educational rights of children with disabilities, whose members represent families in 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories such as American Samoa and Puerto Rico. COPAA has over 2600 members; 134 members are from Maryland.

COPAA supports HB 1022 because it will fill a significant gap in information on alternative schools in Maryland and the types of educational services they are providing to students. Nationally, alternative schools, which are associated with poorer educational outcomes for students, disproportionately enroll students with disabilities.

Central to COPAA’s support of HB 1022 is our concern that students with disabilities and students of color are not disproportionately placed in alternative schools.<sup>1</sup> To determine whether Maryland disproportionately enrolls students with disabilities, HB 1022 requires reporting on the disability status of students enrolled in Maryland’s alternative schools and programs.

COPAA has long advocated for robust data collection to ensure that students with disabilities have access to multi-tiered system of support that integrates school crisis preparation, safety procedures, counseling and mental health support, positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS), restorative practices and trauma informed care. Alternative educational programs for students should be appropriately funded so that they provide the full panoply of educational and therapeutic services required to serve students appropriately.

HB 1022 is an important bill that will help ensure that students with disabilities are served appropriately in alternative schools.

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<sup>1</sup> *Council of Parent Attys. & Advocates, Inc. v. Devos*, 365 F. Supp. 3d 28 (D.D.C. 2019)(vacatur of delay regulations on significant disproportionality and implementing significant disproportionality regulations effective July 2018)

