

TO: The Maggie McIntosh, Chair
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
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Johns Hopkins offers its **support to House Bill 244 Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education**. Johns Hopkins University has always, and will always, prioritize the health of its students, including their mental health. This task force provides a valuable opportunity to collaborate with similar institutions to ensure students are able to access quality mental health care during their time in higher education.

We particularly appreciate the Sponsor's inclusion of private nonprofit institutions of higher education as members of the task force. And we welcome the opportunity to provide insight on our experience to this task force should this legislation pass.

In 2018, JHU published the final report from its own Task Force on Student Mental Health and Well-being. The report identified specific ways to improve mental health on campus and the university has been working diligently to implement the recommendations. Specifically, JHU is working to change the environment to be more supportive of students with mental health issue by launching a communication strategies to change the perception of mental health on campus. JHU is working to improve the mental health services it offers through the Counseling Center. Finally, JHU is providing mental health awareness training for all staff, faculty and students.

The demands on college students have not decreased, and mental health stressors have only increased. In light of the global pandemic, access to mental health services have only become more important. This taskforce has the opportunity to provide assistance and resources to students in higher education across Maryland.

For these reasons and others, Johns Hopkins urges a favorable report on **HB 244 Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education**.