

My name is Ashley Hawkins and I am a member of the Student Government Association at the University of Maryland, College Park. I'd like to start by thanking Chair McIntosh and all the members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to share our thoughts on this bill. Thank you also to Delegate Palakovich Carr for introducing this legislation, which will ensure that all USM students have access to essential mental health services at all times.

I would not be able to provide this testimony if not for the mental health services provided by the University of Maryland. As a freshman, I sought help from our Counseling Center multiple times and had to wait three weeks for an appointment due to the lack of immediate available sessions. After receiving aid from both the Counseling Center and the Health Center's Behavioral Health Services, my grades went up, I became more involved on campus, and I felt more empowered to succeed. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the UMD Counseling Center saw almost 10,000 students¹. As the lack of available appointments indicates, I was not alone in my struggle. As we entered the fall semester this year, data from our university highlighted that students felt more alone and were showing more signs of depression. Our Counseling Center has made modifications to increase appointment availability, but the reality is that the Counseling Center alone cannot respond to the mental health concerns of all students.

This bill protects the health and safety of students by providing them with easily accessible mental health resources via the Maryland Crisis Hotline. Placing this number on the ID cards distributed at almost every institution ensures that students have the necessary help in a vulnerable moment, supporting them in their weakest moments. We also urge this committee to follow the lead of California's and Kentucky's state legislatures by including the National Domestic Violence Hotline and National Sexual Assault Hotline in the optional numbers that institutions may provide. In order to best serve the campus community, all students need access to essential crisis services.

It is for the health and safety of all University System of Maryland students that we, the Student Government Association at the University of Maryland, urge a favorable report on the Student Identification Cards – Required Information Act.

Sincerely,
Ashley Hawkins, *Engineering Representative*
Dan Alpert, *Student Body President*
Ben Baitman, *Director of Government Affairs*

1. [Counseling Center Annual Review 2018-2019](#)