



Delegate Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Delegate Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 700 – Education - Disruption of School Activities - Repeal of Prohibition

Position: Support as Amended

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

Many students who exhibit disruptive behavior in school are in fact communicating their mental and emotional distress in the only way they know how. HB 700 would remove school disruption from the short list of criminal offenses that are specific to and typically enforced in schools. It is unconscionable that these children can be arrested and charged with a criminal offense especially as these arrests disproportionately affect students of color.

HB 700 will help us to break the “school-to-prison” pipeline which derails the lives of too many Maryland students. Schools need better and more humane, student-centered discipline procedures, integrated with comprehensive systems of emotional and behavioral support for these students with such needs. School psychologists stand ready to help our schools to develop and to grow these supports, and to provide the mental health supports many of the students need.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 700. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Potter, Ph.D., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association