



Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Robbyn Lewis

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 9, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 548 – *Human Services – Trauma-Informed Care – Commission and Training*

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is a statewide network of private agencies serving at-risk children and youth and advocates for a system of care in Maryland that meets the needs of children and families. MARFY is a program of Maryland Nonprofits and **supports** the passage of House Bill 548.

House Bill 548 creates a Commission on Trauma-Informed Care with the purpose of coordinating a statewide initiative to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed services that impact children, youth, families, and older adults. The Commission is charged with a number of functions, including developing a statewide strategy for government agencies to become trauma-responsive; coordinating with Maryland Department of Health to develop trauma-informed care training; disseminating information among agencies about best practices for preventing and mitigating the effects of trauma; establishing an evaluation process and submitting an evaluation report for each agency; advising and assisting the governor in providing oversight and accountability in implementing the requirements of the Commission; and making recommendations regarding improvements to existing laws relating to children, youth, families, and older adults in Maryland. The legislation also mandates a process for making agencies trauma-informed, through training, technical assistance, and changes to agency policies and practices to create a trauma-informed approach.

Research has shown that adverse childhood experiences, commonly referred to as ACEs are common and have a strong cumulative impact on the risk of common health and social problems across the lifespan. Exposure to ACEs and other adversities can lead to underperformance in school and employment, poor mental health, substance abuse, chronic physical health problems. The majority of children and youth served by MARFY members have all been impacted by ACEs and that impact has significantly contributed to their current and future challenges.

Passage of House Bill 548 will provide a framework for developing a statewide, coordinated approach to addressing childhood adversity and its impacts. When state agencies understand the effects of trauma and adversity and implement policies and procedures that effectively prevent childhood adversities and mitigate their adverse effects, all Maryland children, youth, and families will benefit. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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