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Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operation Committee
6 Bladen Street
House Office Building, Rm 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB915: Workgroup on Black, Latino, and Other Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals (SUPPORT)

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, **supports HB915: Workgroup on Black Latino, and Other Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals** which would establish a workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding certain mental health professionals and certain students in the State who are Black, Latino, or otherwise underrepresented in the mental health profession.

As of 2015, 86% of psychologists in the U.S. workforce were white; 5% were Asian; 5% were Latino, 4% were Black or African-American, and 1% were multiracial or among other ethnic groups, which is less diverse than the U.S. population as a whole, which is 62% white and 38% racial/ethnic minority¹.

Data suggests that racial/ethnic minorities are entering the workforce in greater numbers. In, 2015, 66% of early career psychologists were white and 34% were racial/ethnic minorities¹. Additionally, in 2016, 32% of earned psychology doctorates were awarded to racial/ethnic minorities, with 68% being awarded to white clinicians¹.

Research has shown that racial match between therapist and client is a strong predictor of access and quality of care¹.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). American Community Survey 1-Year PUMS file. Retrieved from www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html. "Other" racial/ethnic groups included American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and people of two or more races. U.S. doctorate holders included individuals in the workforce with a doctoral/professional degree in any field. Total may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

¹ NSF, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (2015). National Survey of College Graduates Public Use Microdata File and Codebook. Retrieved from <https://ncesdata.nsf.gov/datadownload>. Early career psychologists included employed individuals who have received a doctorate or professional degree in psychology within the last 10 years.

¹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. (2015). Completions Surveys. [Data files and dictionaries]. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/DataFiles.aspx>.

Clearly there is more work to be done to increase representation of Black, Latino, and other racial and ethnic minorities in the profession of psychology in Maryland.

In addition to the robust representation from Maryland HBCU's suggested in the current iteration of HB0915, we would hope that this work group will also include representatives from further racial minorities and ethnic groups. We at MPA would be happy to provide suggestions of additional groups that may be of benefit. Also, we would welcome the opportunity to take part in this critical work expanding critical racial and ethnic minority representation among Maryland psychologists by suggesting that a member of MPA be included in this work group.

Thank you for considering our comments. We ask the committee for a favorable vote on **HB915**. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Executive Director, Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE at 410-992-4258 or exec@marylandpsychology.org.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 132. If we can be of any further assistance as the House Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Executive Director, Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE at 410-992-4258 or exec@marylandpsychology.org.

Esther Finglass

Esther Finglass, Ph.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs