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February 22, 2021

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The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: SB548 – Public Schools - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys - Revisions

Position: Support

Dear Chair Kaiser and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in support of **SB548 – Public Schools - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys – Revisions**.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS), developed by the Centers for Disease Control and administered by the Maryland State Department of Education, is designed to collect data on behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability of our citizens. These data include, but are not limited to, alcohol and other drug use, tobacco use, sexual behaviors, unintentional injuries and violence, and poor physical activity and dietary behaviors. The results of this anonymous biennial survey of students in middle and high school, published by the Maryland Department of Health, provide vital information to the state and to each Maryland jurisdiction about the risky behaviors of our children, and highlight areas requiring prevention and intervention.

SB548 amends Maryland Law regarding the YRBS/YTS to broaden the scope of the survey, to include questions regarding both adverse childhood experiences (ACES), as well as positive childhood experiences. With our growing awareness of the adverse impact of ACES on our children, it is essential that we collect these data, to broaden our understanding and to enable effective screening and intervention when needed.

For these reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 548.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 548. 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.

Sincerely,

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