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February 19, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street
House Office Building, Rm 241
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB851 - Corrections - Restrictive Housing - Serious Mental Illness

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Clippinger 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 **HB00851: Corrections - Restrictive Housing - Serious Mental Illness** which would place certain limits and require certain safeguards as it relates to certain types of restrictive housing in correctional settings for inmates with a serious mental illness and functional impairments.

It has been recognized that significant segregation from others for extended periods of time can have a deleterious impact upon inmates emotional and behavioral states, especially those who are already vulnerable due to serious mental health concerns. A large portion of inmates in correctional settings experience significant mental health concerns, and that many of those inmates have serious/chronic forms of mental illness. This bill takes important steps to ensure that restrictive housing is used only when necessary for these individuals, and in a manner that prioritizes harm reduction. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this bill in greater detail and offer our support.

For these reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB851**.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB851. 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, 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