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January 15, 2021

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The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: HB237 - State Department of Education - Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices - Guidance and Assistance

Position: Support with Amendment

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 **HB 237 – State Department of Education - Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices - Guidance and Assistance**, with a language amendment.

We are recommending that the language in Section (D) be changed from “advisory group shall **develop** tools and materials” to “shall **identify** tools and materials” to more clearly indicate the role of the advisory group as gathering and providing information about materials that have already been established as evidence-based rather than creating new materials.

We are writing in support of this bill as part of the ongoing efforts to improve the literacy skills of all students in the state of Maryland. The bill is designed to support the development of a Dyslexia Handbook, an evidence-based resource that will be invaluable to schools and teachers as they seek to identify, understand and intervene effectively to address reading difficulties. In our work with families, schools and professionals it has been our experience that this information is not readily accessible to teachers – our professionals on the front lines of our education. The development of a Dyslexia Handbook will be a major positive step towards providing effective instruction and intervention to every Maryland student. This will help ensure that every Maryland child develops a life skill that is critical not only to their academic success, but also to their lifelong success and health as adults.

For these reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 237 with the language amendment suggested.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stefanie Reeves, CAE

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 237. 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