



TESTIMONY FOR HB1089
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION – EXPANSION OF MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES AND PROHIBITION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (POLICE–FREE
SCHOOLS ACT)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Acevero

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1089 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members believe that police should not be walking the halls in primary and secondary schools. The fact that police are in the schools has led to a disproportionate number of black and brown students and students with learning issues entering the criminal justice system for disruptive behavior instead of being offered counseling or other services.

This bill would prohibit a primary or secondary school from contracting with a local law enforcement agency and station persons with arrest authority on school grounds, or to have their own local police force. It also establishes a School Safety Subcabinet Advisory Board to promote safe schools in a manner that minimizes school exclusion and justice system involvement for students.

The bill prioritizes school social workers, counselors, school psychologists and restorative approaches coordinators instead of police officers. The goal is to remedy the behavior of the child, not arrest them or suspend them. This is what parents want and need for their children and what we need for our society.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.