



Delegate Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 418 – Symbols of Hate – Policy

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been a rise in the use of hateful symbols on school property. Such symbols, as defined in HB418, have no place in our community, let alone in what should be one of the safest places Maryland's children go – their schools. Student and staff mental health and wellbeing are negatively impacted by such events, which have the potential to create lasting trauma. Requiring local school boards to develop policy related to the use of such symbols will undoubtedly have a positive impact on school climate and will contribute to students' feelings of safety when they are at school and in their community.

MSPA supports HB 418 and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or our policy consultant, Rachael Faulkner, at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or 410-693-4000.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Potter, Ph.D., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association