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March 10, 2022

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 916 Higher Education - Programs for Behavioral Health Professionals in Primary and Secondary Schools - Requirements and Grant Program

Position: Support

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, is writing to express **SUPPORT** for **House Bill 916 Higher Education - Programs for Behavioral Health Professionals in Primary and Secondary Schools**, which would serve to increase the number and diversity of school psychologists and other professionals delivering behavioral health services to children in Maryland's schools.

We are aware of disturbing increases in the numbers of students with serious behavioral health needs, and this trend is aggravated by the serious national shortage of behavioral health workers employed in our schools, including school psychologists, school counselors, and social workers. Our school behavioral health colleagues are reporting increased levels of depression, anxiety, aggression, and trauma in the students they encounter. It is essential that we increase the numbers of behavioral health professionals working in our schools, but the applicants just aren't out there. There are simply not enough qualified candidates graduating from our institutions of higher education available to apply for these positions.

House Bill 916 will ensure that Maryland graduate programs for behavioral health professionals become accessible to a much wider pool of potential applicants, and in doing so will go a long way towards alleviating the growing shortage. We urge a favorable report on this important legislation.

If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Executive Director, Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE at 410-992-4258 or exec@marylandpsychology.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Linda McGhee

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., J.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