



March 11, 2022

Chair Maggie McIntosh
Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Vice Chair Mark Chang
Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Honorable Chair McIntosh and Vice Chair Chang,


Greetings to you and all my esteemed former colleagues in the Maryland General Assembly. I write to express my strong support for Delegate Valentino-Smith's bill to establish an advisory committee on mental health care access for students at Maryland's institutions of higher education.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many college students in Maryland facing mental health challenge struggled to connect to resources. In their October 2019 Joint Chairmen's report on campus mental health services, the Chancellors of the University System of Maryland, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and Morgan State University reported increased student demand, long wait times, strained resources, and staffing shortages. Nationwide, the reported rates of depression among college students doubled between 2009 and 2019, and reported rates of anxiety among college students increased by 14 percent between 2013 and 2019. During the COVID-19 pandemic, fear, grief, and isolation have further increased the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders among college students.

These complex and urgent challenges demand thoughtful consideration and decisive action by policymakers. To that end, Delegate Valentino-Smith's legislation, HB 1029, would establish a commission to examine why it is so challenging for many of Maryland's colleges and universities to meet the current demand for mental health services. It would identify relevant best practices and care models. Starting as soon as December 2022, the commission would make recommendations to the governor and the legislature on how we can overcome current barriers, financial or otherwise, and ultimately expand access to mental health care for our college students.

I believe HB 1029 is a timely and important bill. Thank you for your taking my testimony, and for all of your essential work to ensure our young people can get the mental health care services they need.

Very truly yours,


Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress