



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131 Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 5,, 2022

Bill: House Bill 495 – Education- Student Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

**Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, 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.

The purpose of this letter is to provide support for HB 495, which would allow students to engage in peaceful demonstrations without the risk of disciplinary action. This bill is in support of social justice and the rights of the child.

As school psychologists, we believe that all students have the right to attend schools in a safe, supportive environment. This bill allows students to advocate for their own needs to improve the safety and security of their schools. It also reduces the use of exclusionary discipline practices, which cause harm to students.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 495. If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Scott Tiffin at [stiffin@policypartners.net](mailto:stiffin@policypartners.net) or 443-350-1325.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association