



January 18, 2022

Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of HB 118 (2022): Public Schools – Student Attendance – Excused Absences for Mental Health Needs.**

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1300 members and fully support students getting excused time off from school to address mental health issues and concerns.

In light of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic and beyond, students should be given the flexibility, health care services and support to take time away from school as they adjust to being back learning in person. And the many realities that have been brought about by the pandemic.

We trust that any time off or excused absences would be tracked and reported by the school to the child's school support staff, medical team members and also tracked by MSDE. Especially in the case where a student might then qualify for ongoing mental health support, social service supports and mental health counseling services. We trust that these services would be provided to the student in school, as well as outside of the school setting, as needed. Their future success and health depend on necessary supports being in place to support them during these unusual times and beyond as part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Thank you all for supporting health and wellbeing of all Maryland students.

Please support House Bill 118 and return a favorable report. Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

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