

# **H.B. 738 - Del. Griffith - Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike Griffith

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of H.B. 738**

**Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase**

**(School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)**

I'm requesting a favorable report on H.B. 738, the *Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)*, which doubles the funding for School Resource Officers (SRO) statewide from 10 million to 20 million starting in fiscal year 2025.

The need for this increased support is more evident than ever. Over the last several decades, we have seen a rapid increase not only in the number of violent and criminal incidents occurring in our schools but also in the severity of those incidents.

This upward trend prompted the Maryland General Assembly in 2019 to unanimously pass legislation to allocate 10 million for SRO funding statewide but despite this, the trend of increased incidents on school grounds has continued to climb. This is further exacerbated by the fact that only 19.5% of all Maryland public schools have a full-time SRO. With such a low percentage and the increased number of incidents on school grounds, students, teachers, and administrative staff are left unprotected and potentially in harm's way.

Unfortunately, we've already seen this play out in our districts - just recently in an Anne Arundel County public school, an SRO received reports, investigated, found, and confiscated a handgun, loaded magazine, and lose ammunition in the possession of a 12-year-old student.

Then again in Harford County, residents, parents, and students of where I attended middle school – Aberdeen Middle School – watched the need for SROs play out in front of them when a male student touched female classmates inappropriately during a school dance. Once the SRO became aware of the incidents, they intervened and provided the protection the females and other students needed at that time.

In both cases, had the SROs not been present, there is no telling how the incidents could have escalated and resulted in further danger.

In addition to this protection, SROs also play a vital role in the lives of students and within the community, such as

1. Building impactful and meaningful relationships between children and law enforcement, which helps deter and prevent children from committing crimes in the future; and

2. Producing positive interactions with special needs students attending public schools across the state.

Oftentimes, special needs students, who sometimes act seemingly but unintentionally violent, know their school's assigned SRO, and develop a basic level of trust with them. In turn, the SRO understands what makes the students unique and can therefore provide an extra level of protection from outside harm. As a father of a special needs child in the Harford County Public School system, this level of protection, understanding, and guidance stemming from an SRO's relationship with my child brings a certain level of peace and security to my life.

For all these reasons and so many more, I request a favorable report on H.B. 738.

# **HB 788 Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire F**

Uploaded by: Theodore Delbridge

Position: FAV



*State of Maryland*

## **Maryland Institute *for* Emergency Medical Services Systems**

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Wes Moore  
Governor

Clay B. Stamp  
Chairman, EMS Board

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH  
Executive Director

### **HB 788 Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting within Maryland**

#### **MIEMSS Position: Support**

**Bill Summary:** HB 788 establishes a Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting within Maryland to study and make recommendations for recruiting and retaining fire fighters in Maryland. The Commission's findings and recommendations are to be submitted on or before December 1, 2023.

#### **Rationale:**

- Fire fighters are an integral part of Maryland's emergency medical services (EMS) system. They are routinely dispatched on calls for EMS services and as first responders, provide early treatment and stabilization until more advanced care arrives.
- Additionally, fire fighters are dispatched to the scene of motor vehicle collisions to secure a safe scene for EMS clinicians, the victims, and the public and assist with extrication of victims, etc.
- There are numerous jurisdictions across the state that have cross-trained personnel that respond to EMS calls. EMS is closely connected with the fire service in Maryland, both volunteer and career.
- Fire fighters and EMS Clinicians work together as partners. Effective recruitment and retention of fire fighters impacts Maryland's overall EMS system.
- The Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting in Maryland will create a forum to identify ways to attract, support and retain fire fighters in Maryland.

#### **MIEMSS Supports HB 788 and requests a Favorable Report.**

# **3-16 HB0738\_Public Schools Appropriations for Scho**

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: UNF



## TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

### HB0738 – Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)

**POSITION: Oppose**

**BY: Nancy Soreng, President**

**Date: March 16, 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. LWVMD supports programs and reforms that promote equal access to quality education and ensure all students have access to research based programs. In addition, LWVMD is committed to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) in principle and in practice.

**LWVMD opposes HB0738 Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)**, which increases funding for school resource officers from \$10 million to \$20 million. This bill ignores the evidence on the harms caused by having police officers in schools. School resource officers often deal with school discipline issues, which has increased the likelihood that students will come into contact with the juvenile justice system, and thus promote the school-to-prison pipeline. Black students and students with disabilities are disproportionately arrested. For example:

- Black students represent 56% of all school related arrests, even though they are 33% of the school population.<sup>1</sup>
- Students with disabilities make up just 12% of the student population but received 23% of all school arrests.<sup>2</sup>
- School-related arrests are not restricted to serious or dangerous behavior, but are often for minor misbehavior or disruptions rather than actions that endanger other students.
- School-related arrests criminalizes student behavior.

Maryland reported 3,141 arrests in the 2018-19 school year (the last year of data prior to the COVID pandemic). With a statewide enrollment of 909,414, the arrest rate was 3.4 arrests for every 1000

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland Public Schools arrest data: School year 2018-2019*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/StudentArrest/MarylandPublicSchoolsArrestDataSY20182019.pdf><https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/StudentArrest/MarylandPublicSchoolsArrestDataSY20182019.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

Maryland K-12 public school students. This was an increase from 3.1 arrests per 1000 students in the 2015-16 school year. Comparatively, the national school-related arrest rate was 2.2 per 1000 students.<sup>3</sup>

This bill ignores research-based interventions that are effective in improving school discipline and have the potential to reduce disparities. These strategies include: relationship building through approaches such as restorative practices;<sup>4</sup> social-emotional learning programs that help students understand social interactions and manage their emotions;<sup>5</sup> trauma-informed approaches;<sup>6</sup> and changing the structure of the disciplinary system or revising the disciplinary codes of conduct.<sup>7</sup>

HB 738 focuses on funding for school resource officers without considering the need to fund proven strategies that make schools safer and improve school discipline. Maryland needs to invest in supporting these strategies rather than providing additional funding for school resource officers.

We urge an unfavorable report on HB738.

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<sup>3</sup> United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2019). 2017-18 civil rights data collection. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/estimations/2017-2018>

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, A. & Evans, K. R. (2020). *The starts and stumbles of restorative justice in education: Where do we go from here?* Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. <https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/restorative-justice>

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, 88(4),1156-1171. <https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cdev.12864>

<sup>6</sup> Jones, W., Berg, J. & Osher, D. (2018). *Trauma and learning policy initiative (TLPI): Trauma-sensitive schools, descriptive study, final report*. Washington, DC: American Institutes of Research. [https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report\\_Full-Report-002-2-1.pdf](https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report_Full-Report-002-2-1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating disparities in school discipline: A framework for intervention. *Review of Research in Education*,41(1). <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499>



**HB 738 Oppose.pdf**  
Uploaded by: Maddie Long  
Position: UNF



**Testimony in opposition to  
House Bill 738: Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures –  
Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)**

**House Appropriations Committee  
Position: Oppose**

March 16, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. We are also a member of the Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD), which brings together advocates, service providers, and community members to transform school discipline practices within Maryland’s public school systems. **Strong Schools Maryland urges an unfavorable vote on House Bill 738**, which if enacted would increase, from \$10 million to \$20 million, certain annual appropriations in order to expand law enforcement and school resource officers in Maryland public schools.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. Critical to that World-Class system is safe learning environments that allow teachers to teach and students to learn. The Blueprint acknowledges the importance of restorative practices as a means to create these safe environments that build a sense of belonging, safety, and social responsibility for everyone in the school community. However, not only does House Bill 738 not further the Blueprint’s vision, but it also creates unnecessary opportunities for discrimination and trauma rather than the safety it claims to promote.

Police presence in schools **does not** make schools safer from egregious crimes such as school shootings, as proven by accumulating research.<sup>1</sup> Further, the presence of school resource officers **disproportionately impacts** black students and students with disabilities. In the 2018–2019 school year, black students received 56% of school arrests in Maryland, despite being only a third of the student population.<sup>2</sup> In that same year, students with IEPs received 23% of school arrests in Maryland, even though they were 12% of the student population.<sup>3</sup> Data shows that **the use of restorative practices** – not increased law enforcement – improves outcomes for students and can also improve overall school safety. In Montgomery County, pilot schools that implemented a restorative justice program reported a 70% decline in office referrals for misconduct.<sup>4</sup> After Baltimore City Schools implemented restorative practices in their pilot schools, suspensions fell by 44% in one school year.<sup>5</sup>

It is the responsibility of the Maryland General Assembly to advance legislation that fosters trustworthy relationships between schools and students. Additional funding of school resource officers is incompatible with a cohesive commitment to the Blueprint.

We urge this committee to reject House Bill 738, and instead utilize this Session to advance legislation that promotes restorative practices strategies that are reflective of the highest-achieving schools in the world.

**For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 738.**

*For more information, contact Maddie Long:  
maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org*

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<sup>1</sup> [O'Neill and McGloin, 2007](#)

<sup>2</sup> [MSDE 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> [Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, 2018](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Deborah T. Eisenberg et al., 2018](#)

# **HB 738 - Letter of Information.pdf**

Uploaded by: Helene Grady

Position: INFO



WES MOORE  
*Governor*

HELENE GRADY  
*Secretary*

ARUNA MILLER  
*Lieutenant Governor*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## **HOUSE BILL 738 Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2023)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: March 16, 2023**

**COMMITTEE: House Appropriations**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** HB 738 increases the general fund mandate for the Safe Schools Fund from \$10 million to \$20 million in FY 2025 and increases the amount that must be budgeted for grants to local school systems from the Safe Schools Fund accordingly.

**EXPLANATION:** The Safe Schools Fund currently receives \$10 million in mandated general funds each year for grants to local school systems to provide school resource officer (SRO) or local law enforcement (LLE) coverage. This bill would double that amount to \$20 million beginning in FY 2025.

This legislation would be an addition to ongoing enhancements for education and student support services. Funding in the State budget for K-12 education is at record levels in FY 2024, at approximately \$8.8 billion. Existing funding can already be utilized to enhance efforts to boost school security and safety at the local level. The FY 2024 budget also includes record funding targeted at safety in public schools. On top of the \$10 million in existing mandated funding for the Safe Schools Fund, the Governor's FY 2024 budget includes \$10 million for security improvements to public schools, \$3 million to support schools and childcare centers at risk of hate crimes and bias incidents, and \$3 million to help local school systems conduct safety evaluations. The safety evaluations are supported by surplus funding in the Safe Schools Fund.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and strives to create a structurally balanced budget, in which the growth in spending is less than the growth in revenues. In light of current economic uncertainty and the potential for a downturn, the Department urges caution in passing legislation significantly expanding State required expenditures without offsetting revenues. General fund mandates can have the effect of crowding out the State's ability to fund staffing, salary adjustments, and in general invest strategically and holistically in State government's human capital and the infrastructure required to carry out State government's mission. State government must be intentional, disciplined, and strategic with its allocation of State funding to ensure maximum impact toward priority outcomes.

**General Fund Structural Budget Outlook, Fiscal 2024 – 2028 (\$ millions)**

	<b>Est. 2024</b>	<b>Est. 20235</b>	<b>Est. 2026</b>	<b>Est. 2027</b>	<b>Est. 2028</b>
<b>Structural Balance</b>	\$337	\$232	\$263	\$529	\$1,113
<b>Adjusted for Blueprint</b>				-\$963	-\$1,207

Department of Legislative Services, January 2023 Fiscal Briefing

For additional information, contact Marc Nicole at  
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