

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and Environmental Affairs Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 482 - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

**Hearing Date:** February 15, 2023

**Position:** Favorable with Amendments

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The Maryland School Counselors Association supports *Senate Bill 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools*. The bill establishes permanent eligibility for mental health professionals in schools to participate in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

Maryland students are facing a behavioral health crisis. In the 2022 Databook, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that the number of youth experiencing anxiety and depression jumped from 9.4% to 12.8% between 2016 and 2022 in Maryland.<sup>1</sup> We need more mental health providers in schools. This bill would focus state resources on recruiting and retaining mental health providers through a loan assistance repayment program.

We would like to request an amendment to clarify that school counselors could participate in the program:

On page 2 in line 12 insert “SCHOOL COUNSELOR” after “SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR”

We ask for a favorable report with this amendment. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

<sup>1</sup> <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>