

**SB0482-EEE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## Senate Bill 482

### *Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: February 22, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 482. This bill would extend eligibility to Maryland's existing student loan repayment assistance program to mental and behavioral school staff who serve at least one year in a public school.

Maryland's public school educators, State and local government staff, and even nonprofit professionals already enjoy the aid of the Student Loan Repayment Program and its accompanying tax credit. SB 482 recognizes the hiring and retention challenges facing other public school professionals, and extends this existing program to school staff supporting our students' behavioral and mental health needs.

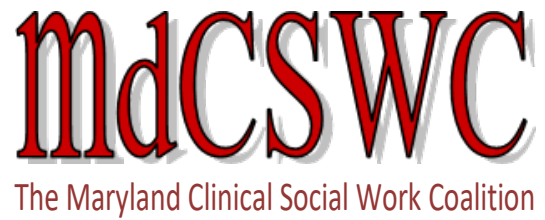
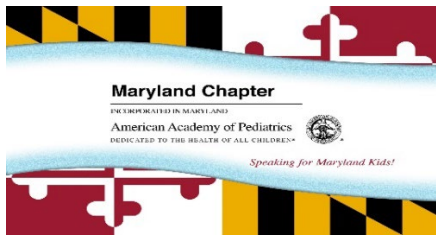
This is an especially important undertaking at a time when our students are struggling with mental health as they return to classrooms post-pandemic and as our schools struggle to hire and retain qualified staff. By allowing these critical school staff to apply for the State's student loan repayment assistance program, these professionals are more likely to serve in a Maryland public school and to remain serving in them. Additionally, doing so offers an added incentive for more people to pursue education in these understaffed fields.

Counties remain committed to supporting all students and the school professionals working with them. SB 482 would help ensure our public schools are better staffed with qualified behavioral and mental health staff and that the state's most vulnerable low-income students have better access to their services. Counties view this bill as a valuable tool to help address this vexing issue, and accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 482.

**SB0482\_FAV\_MDAAP, MdCSWC\_Janet L. Hoffman Loan Ass**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
The Honorable Karen Lewis Young

FROM: Christine K. Krone  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000

DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 482 – *Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools*

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The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and the Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition (MDCSWC) submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 482.

Senate Bill 482 expands the list of eligible professions that qualify for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) to include mental health professionals. The bill defines “mental health professional” as including a school psychologist, resource psychologist, psychologist coordinator, social worker, social worker supervisor, or mental health coordinator.

MDAAP and MDCSWC support this incentive for recruiting and retaining mental health professionals to public schools in the State. Access to mental health professionals in schools promotes mental health in general, provides a positive school climate, offers prevention and early identification, and individualized services and supports. Furthermore, loan assistance repayment programs (LARP) may attract mental health professionals from neighboring states that currently do not offer assistance repayment programs. Recipients of Maryland’s Janet L. Hoffman LARP can receive up to \$30,000 (installments of \$10,000 annually for 3 years) for loan repayment where the total debt exceeds \$75,001. That is a significant percentage of debt that can be covered for serving as a mental health professional in a Maryland public school. For these reasons, MDAAP and MDCSWC urge a favorable report.

# **SB 482 - Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dawn Luedtke

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 7

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Senator Brian Feldman  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**SUBJECT: Support SB 482**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 482 regarding loan repayment assistance for mental health professionals working in Maryland's public schools. This would incentivize individuals who are interested in mental and behavioral health work to serve our K-12 population without fear of mounting student loan debt.

A survey by the CDC revealed four in 10 teenagers reported feeling "persistently sad or hopeless," with one in five contemplating suicide. Our local students are no exception. In the first two months of 2022, [nine Montgomery County Public Schools \(MCPS\) students committed suicide](#), yet we started this school year with [30 vacant school psychologist positions](#). With this limited capacity, mental health professionals in our public schools are forced to focus on the most pressing needs, limiting them to crisis intervention and legally required services like special education assessments. This means that students with anxiety disorders, PTSD, depression, and other mental health challenges are not having their needs addressed until they are on the brink of a crisis, with help coming too late for far too many.

The student loan crisis has only exacerbated this shortage of mental health professionals available to work within the local school systems. With increasing education costs, especially for the advanced training and licensure required for psychologists and social workers, many people cannot afford to go into this field. Once the educational and licensure requirements are completed, the pressure to pay off student loans means qualified professionals must choose between seeking employment where they can make the most money over those where they will have the greatest impact. By offering students loan assistance for mental health professionals in public schools, we can incentivize highly qualified mental health professionals to seek employment serving students and families in our public schools.

SB 482 is an investment in the health and well-being of our students and our public school professionals. It will allow for mental health prevention and intervention work, increase student well-being, and improve overall school community climate. .

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "L".

Dawn Luedtke  
Councilmember, District 7  
Montgomery County

# **SB 482- Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment**

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV





Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 22, 2023

To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 482 - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

Dear Chair Feldman:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 482.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future.

There is a growing need for behavioral health services. According to the 2021 Maryland Youth Pandemic Behavior Survey, nearly three in five high school students struggled with mental health issues during the past year.<sup>1</sup> Approximately one in five Maryland teens seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and 28% reported living with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal.<sup>2</sup> Between 2013 and 2021, emergency department visits for behavioral health conditions climbed from 10.5% to 18.3%. Patient acuity also increased—meaning, there were more patients turning to emergency departments in crisis, and they were sicker when they got there.<sup>3</sup>

Hospital emergency departments are often the first point of contact or the facility of last resort for individuals suffering from a behavioral health crisis. Patients and families turn to an emergency department for care when they cannot find treatment in the community or when the condition worsens. However, schools can play a critical role in supporting students before they are in crisis if properly resourced.

Senate Bill 482 would extend the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include those who are mental health professionals working in public schools. Loan repayment can be an effective recruitment and retention tool. This legislation supports the well-being of

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Health. (2021). "[Maryland Youth Pandemic Behavior Survey 2021](#)."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> HSCRC Case Mix Data

students by helping recruit mental health professionals in public schools and supports the growth of this critical component of the health care workforce.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 482

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs

[Jkrienke@mhaonline.org](mailto:Jkrienke@mhaonline.org)

# **SB 482.Hoffman Student Loan Repayment for School M**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 482  
**TITLE:** Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools  
**DATE:** February 22, 2023  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 482 in order to expand the scope of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include graduates working in public schools as mental health professionals, including school psychologists, social workers, and mental health coordinators.

MABE greatly appreciates the focus of this legislation on expanding an existing state program to meaningfully enhance the availability of high quality mental health services to our students. Senate Bill 482 would contribute significantly toward the recruitment and retention of much needed mental and behavioral health professionals in schools across the state. MABE supports the role of the current LARP in providing financial assistance to teachers, including those teachers who work in a Federal Title I school or school identified for improvement by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). However, the current LARP does not benefit professionals serving in these critically important mental health professions. Therefore, MABE strongly supports the program expansion proposed by Senate Bill 482.

MABE's support for this bill is grounded in the association's advocacy for the essential staffing and resources necessary to meet the mental and behavioral health needs of our nearly 900,000 public school students. The benefits and value of access to high quality school-based mental and behavioral health services for students and families, teachers and staff, and communities at large can hardly be overstated.

Prior to the pandemic, evidence was mounting that additional resources were needed to provide the holistic array of social, emotional, behavioral and academic supports for all students. Then the pandemic saw a dramatic rise in students reporting experiencing anxiety and depression and other symptoms. Today, students and staff are coping with these accumulated challenges in an environment of educator and other professional staffing shortages.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 482.

# **Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program**

Uploaded by: Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
Legislative District 3  
Frederick County

Committee on Education, Energy,  
and the Environment



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Karen.Young@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21, 2023

Support of SB 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (Mental Health in Public Schools)

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland Senate  
11 Bladen Street, Room 302  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

Our students are struggling with mental health as they return to classrooms post-pandemic and as our schools struggle to hire and retain qualified staff. By allowing critical school staff to apply for the State’s student loan repayment assistance program, these professionals are more likely to serve in a Maryland public school and remain there. Additionally, doing so offers an added incentive for more people to pursue education in these understaffed fields.

Senate Bill 391 expands the purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in public schools. It requires the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

Senate Bill 488 would expand the “eligible fields of employment” for this program to specifically include the following positions:

“(D) “MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, RESOURCE PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOLOGIST COORDINATOR, SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORKER SUPERVISOR, OR MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR.”

This language defines the Legislature's intent for positions included in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program. In addition, it will expand the eligibility for this specific group to allow those now eligible to have graduated from "any accredited college or university."

I urge you to support this much needed extension of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance program.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

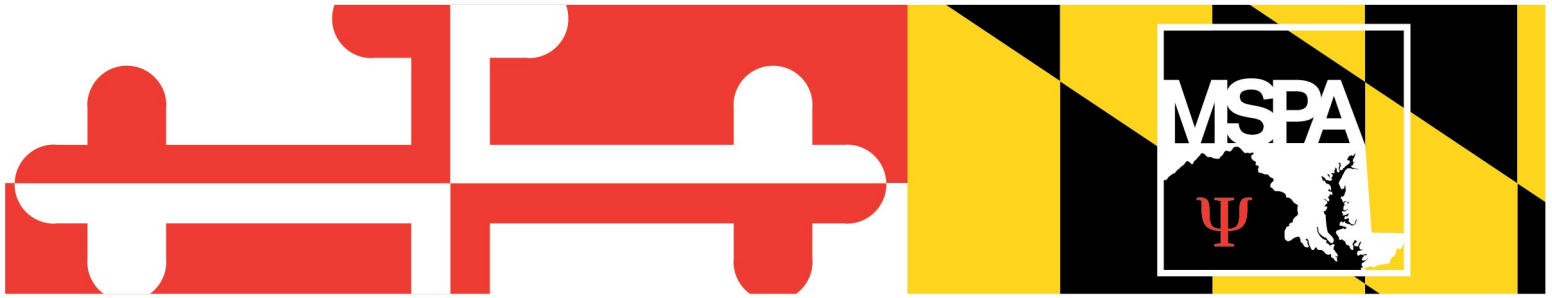
Senator Karen Lewis Young

# **SB482.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katie Phipps

Position: FAV





Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21, 2023

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

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, 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 well-being of students and families across the state.

We support the expansion of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include the opportunity for mental health professionals, including school psychologists, social workers, and mental health coordinators, to apply for loan repayment assistance. School psychologists provide essential services including psychological assessment, counseling, and crisis response, to many of Maryland's most vulnerable students. In order to become certified as a school psychologist, a school psychologist must complete a minimum of three years of graduate school. School psychologists pursuing a doctoral degree will spend more years in graduate school before becoming a certified or licensed school psychologist. Due to limitations in scholarship funding for graduate-level coursework, many school psychologists take out loans and accrue debt before beginning their public school careers. Such a financial burden of entering the field of school psychology acts as a barrier to the expansion and diversification of school psychologists in Maryland.

The current bill only seeks to expand who is able to apply for loan repayment assistance and does not require an increase in the amount of funds allocated to the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program. Therefore, this is a solution with no additional cost that can assist in incentivizing school psychologists to remain in Maryland public schools instead of pursuing more lucrative careers in the private sector. It is also important that this bill, as written, allows for loan repayment assistance to be provided for mental health professionals who attend any accredited college or university because of the current need for Maryland school districts to recruit school psychologists who completed their training in other states. Currently, Maryland graduate programs do not produce enough school psychology graduates to fill the school psychology vacancies in the state. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Shortage Dashboard, 13 school psychologists graduated from Maryland programs in 2021. As of the 2022-2023 school year, Montgomery County Public Schools alone has 35 unfilled school psychologist positions, with colleagues in Baltimore City sharing they have 10 unfilled school psychologist positions and colleagues in Howard County indicating they have 4 vacancies.

If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

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

**SB 482\_HorizonFoundation\_fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kerry Darragh

Position: FAV



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February 22, 2023

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**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**BILL:** SB 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools  
**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is Howard County’s community health foundation and the largest independent health philanthropy in the state of Maryland. We lead community change so everyone in Howard County can live a longer, better life.

**The Foundation is pleased to support SB 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools.**

The Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) helps Marylanders who work in public service jobs repay their student loans. These positions include lawyers, nurses, social workers, teachers and more. SB 482 would expand that list to include mental health professionals in schools, such as school psychologists, school social workers, and mental health coordinators.

Over the past decade, Howard County has identified mental and behavioral health services as a critical need in schools. That need has grown significantly both in Howard County and across the state, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, the Horizon Foundation launched a pilot program with the Howard County Public School System to bring enhanced mental health supports, including 1:1 counseling, to students during the school day. This program is currently expanding to every public school in the County. SB 482 will help Howard County recruit and retain mental health professionals to provide these services, helping to implement this program effectively. With recent data showing that anxiety, depression, and other mental health indicators are on the rise, expanding loan repayment assistance to mental health professionals in schools will help attract providers to meet this growing need and ensure that every student in Howard County can get the mental health support they need and deserve.

Horizon Foundation Testimony  
SB 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment  
Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools  
February 22, 2023

Mental health is a top priority for the Horizon Foundation. In addition to our work with the Howard County Public School System, we have raised awareness through our Mental Health Film Festival and reached thousands of community members with our Emotional Support Human campaign. We have also worked to increase access to mental health crisis services through our work with the Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis Systems (GRBICS) Partnership, as well as helped support the operation of Sheppard Pratt's new urgent care behavioral health clinic in ElkrIDGE.

SB 482 is another tool to help ensure we have the mental health professionals we need to serve our communities. For this reason, the Horizon Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 482** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.

# **Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program**

Uploaded by: Laura Stewart

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland Senate  
Ways and Means Committee - For the Hearing on  
Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools (SB482)  
February 22, 2023  
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***Senate Bill 482 , Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools, aligns with Free State PTA's legislative priority on mental health support for school communities.***

This bill includes assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools.

Free State PTA included the mental health of children as our top priority this year in our Legislative Agenda because our membership shared with us that there is an overwhelming need to address this issue. We support the national associations' recommended staff to student ratios of social workers, psychologists and counselors that provide support to students. Maryland has not met these ratios.<sup>1</sup>

There are many factors affecting the mental health crisis. The Covid-19 closures<sup>2</sup> and the readjustment to in person schools added to student and family stress. Social media has also added to the stress our children face every day. We have seen increased drug overdose<sup>3</sup> and suicide<sup>4</sup>, especially in marginalized groups and girls.

It is recognized that we need more health professionals in schools, but it is difficult to fill these positions. As an example Montgomery County took a year to hire newly funded social workers, and MCPS careers shows 11 openings for psychologists today but only one in the pool. We have been consistently short of psychologists<sup>5</sup> for years. Any incentive to fill and expand the number of mental health professional positions are needed. we could literally save lives. **Therefore, the Free State PTA urges the passage of SB482.**

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

***Marla Posey-Moss***

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<sup>1</sup><https://marylandeducators.org/behavioral-health-expansion/#:~:text=The%20American%20School%20Counselor%20Association,current%20ratio%20is%20327%3A1.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8657359/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/adolescent-drug-overdose-deaths-rose-exponentially-first>

<sup>4</sup> <https://jedfoundation.org/mental-health-and-suicide-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/critical-policy-issues/shortage-of-school-psychologists>



Free State PTA  
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Marla Posey-Moss, President  
[mposey-moss@fspta.org](mailto:mposey-moss@fspta.org)

**SB482\_MSEA\_Lamb\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 482**  
**Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health**  
**Professionals in Public Schools**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**February 22, 2023**

**Lauren Lamb**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 482, which would expand the purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools. It would also require the Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

According to a 2021 joint report from the National Education Association and the Center for Enterprise Strategy, nearly two-thirds (65%) of educators\* under 35 years of age had to take out student loans to complete their education, and 59% of educators with unpaid loans reported that their student debt impacted their ability to save for the future.<sup>1</sup> The burden of student loan debt, which disproportionately

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*\*In this research, "educator" includes K-12 teachers, other certificated members such as school psychologists and social workers, and education support professionals.*

<sup>1</sup> Student Loan Debt Among Educators: A National Crisis, p. 3-4, Accessed February 2023.

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Student%20Loan%20Debt%20among%20Educators.pdf>



impacts educators of color due to institutional racism, persists amidst a critical shortage in school personnel, including mental health providers.<sup>23</sup> In SY 2021-2022, the student to school psychologist ratio in Maryland was 1 to 1,061.<sup>4</sup>

We must strengthen the pipeline of mental health professionals and support those who are already providing support to Maryland students. Including school psychologists, social workers, mental health coordinators, and related school-based mental health professionals in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program will ease the burden on many of these critical providers and incentivize more people to consider school-based mental health professions.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 482.**

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<sup>2</sup> Student Loan Debt Among Educators: A National Crisis, p. 4, Accessed February 2023.

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Student%20Loan%20Debt%20among%20Educators.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Schools struggle to hire more mental health professionals for students, PBS.org, Accessed February 2023.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/schools-struggle-to-hire-more-mental-health-professionals-for-students>

<sup>4</sup> NASP State Shortages Data Dashboard, Accessed February 2023.

<https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/state-shortages-data-dashboard>

**SB 482 PJC Written Testimony (Crossfile).pdf**

Uploaded by: Levi Bradford

Position: FAV



Kelsey Carlson, Paralegal  
Public Justice Center  
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
410-625-9409, ext. 269  
carlsonk@publicjustice.org  
she/her

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

Hearing before the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment, February 22, 2023

### Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit legal services organization which advocates for social justice, and economic and racial equity in Maryland, including by upholding the rights of historically excluded and underserved students through individual representation, community outreach, and systemic advocacy. We are committed to making discipline responsive to students' behavioral needs, fair, appropriate to the infraction, and designed to keep youth on track to graduate.

PJC supports SB 482, which would grant access to loan assistance for mental health professionals who work in Maryland public schools. Mental health professionals provide invaluable support and community to Maryland students. Research shows these supports in schools are a critical way to improve student behavior and maintain school safety.

### School-Based Mental Health Services Make Students and Schools Safer

When students regularly connect with an adult whom they trust and can act in community with, they are more likely to go to that person when they are experiencing crisis and are more likely to have the supports necessary to work through issues in a healthy, non-disruptive way.<sup>1</sup> It is these preventative measures that do the most to increase the psychological and physical safety of students. Other states around the country are investing in "training for school and community members to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health difficulties, and targeted prevention and intervention programs and services supporting the mental health of students . . . includ[ing] integrating mental health care delivery within school settings."<sup>2</sup>

During student crises, mental health professionals with student rapport are best situated to de-escalate a situation that may cause harm to other students and staff. "Social workers, psychologists, and counselors provide crucial direct services to students with mental health issues as well as provide expertise to teachers and principals in addressing behavior issues."<sup>3</sup> Using these intervention decreases the use of exclusionary discipline and keeps students in schools, where they are best situated to grow and learn from their mistakes.

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<sup>1</sup> *ISD 287's Student Safety Coaches: Summary of Literature and Staff Survey, School Year 2019-2020*, Lindsay Turner at 4. Wilder Foundation, Intermediate District 287. (Sept. 2020). <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/isd-287s-student-safety-coaches-summary-literature-and-staff>.

<sup>2</sup> *Replacing School Police with Services that Work*, Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 11 (Aug. 2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 10-11.

*The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.*

## Loan Forgiveness Will Increase the Number and Diversity of Mental Health Professionals in Maryland Schools to Better Meet Student Need

Loan forgiveness programs are critical for bringing in a more diverse workforce of school mental health professionals. Black college students graduate with more student loan debt than their white counterparts, making jobs with lower earning potential less viable for them.<sup>4</sup> Research has shown that reducing student loan burden makes jobs like teaching more accessible to minority candidates, and we would expect the same to be true of jobs in the school mental health profession.<sup>5</sup> This bill would add mental health professionals to the current student debt forgiveness program right alongside educators, which would help address a major barrier to minority participation in school mental health professions. An often-overlooked need in schools is access for non-English speaking students to mental health professionals who speak their native language.<sup>6</sup> This bill will make school mental health jobs attractive to a more diverse array of professionals, including highly valuable multilingual candidates.

Maryland, like many states, is facing a shortage of school mental health professionals in schools. Experts recommend schools employ one school counselor and one social worker for every 250 students.<sup>7</sup> In fact, in Maryland, there is only one school counselor for every 383 students and one social worker for every 2,324 students, nearly one tenth of the recommended number. Additionally, experts recommend schools have one school psychologist for every 500-700 students. Maryland has one for every 1,198 students.<sup>8</sup>

We, like the rest of Maryland families and legislators, takes school safety seriously. For this reason, it is important we take every opportunity to bolster student access to mental health services. SB 482 will enable schools to keep the mental health professionals they have now and incentivize new and better applicants in the future.

For these reasons, the PJC strongly supports Senate Bill 482.

For more information contact:

Kelsey Carlson, she/her  
Paralegal, Public Justice Center  
410-625-9409, ext. 272  
carlsonk@publicjustice.org

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<sup>4</sup> Judith Scott-Clayton and Jing Li, *Black-white disparity in student loan debt more than triples after graduation*, Brookings Institute, (Oct. 2016) (“The moment they earn their bachelor’s degrees, black college graduates owe \$7,400 more on average than their white peers (\$23,400 versus \$16,000, including non-borrowers in the averages). But over the next few years, the black-white debt gap more than triples to a whopping \$25,000. Differences in interest accrual and graduate school borrowing lead to black graduates holding nearly \$53,000 in student loan debt four years after graduation—almost twice as much as their white counterparts.”) <https://www.brookings.edu/research/black-white-disparity-in-student-loan-debt-more-than-triples-after-graduation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Bayliss Fiddiman, Colleen Campbell, and Lisette Partelow, *Student Debt: An Overlooked Barrier to Increasing Teacher Diversity*, Center for American Progress (July 2019) <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Teachers-of-Color-Debt-Burden--1.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Meghan Smith, *For immigrant students, bilingual mental health care is essential. Can schools meet the need?*, GBH News (Nov. 9, 2021) <https://www.wgbh.org/news/education/2021/11/09/for-immigrant-students-bilingual-mental-health-care-is-essential-can-schools-meet-the-need>.

<sup>7</sup> Whitaker, Amir, et al. “Home | American Civil Liberties Union.” *Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students*, ACLU, [https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field\\_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf) at 12.

<sup>8</sup> Whitaker, Amir, et al. “Home | American Civil Liberties Union.” *Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students*, ACLU, [https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field\\_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf) at 13-14.

*The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.*

# **NASW Maryland - 2023 SB 482 FAV - Behavioral Health**

Uploaded by: Mary Beth DeMartino

Position: FAV

**Testimony before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Senate Bill 482: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program –  
Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools**

**\*\*Support\*\*  
February 22, 2023**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Social Work in Schools Committee, we would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 482: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools.

NASW is the largest national organization of the profession, representing over 120,000 social workers nationwide, with 16,000 licensed in the state of Maryland. The Maryland Chapter's Social Work in Schools committee has 39 members who serve in public schools from Allegheny County to the Eastern Shore and from the Pennsylvania line to St. Mary's County. MSDE reports over 600 social workers employed by Maryland schools, with the number growing every year.

Schools provide a unique access point to meet the critical mental health needs of students so that they are emotionally available to profit from instruction. A Master's degree is required to be MSDE-certificated as a School Social Worker in Maryland and school social workers are often assigned to more than one school, usually beginning their professional career with higher student loan debt than their teaching peers. Behavioral health needs occur in children across the socioeconomic spectrum, so it has been nearly impossible for most school social workers to qualify for student debt relief under the current provisions of the Hoffman Loan Assistance Program's guidelines for teachers, which required full-time placement in a school with a Free and Reduced Meal rate of 75%.

Since there just aren't enough of us to meet existing needs, it is critical that we do what we can to attract and retain qualified individuals to serve our students and their families. Senate Bill 482 is a critical step in the right direction, and we urge you to return a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Gail L. Martin, LCSW-C  
Chair, Social Work in Schools Committee  
NASW-MD Chapter

# **SB482.CRSD.Loan Assistance Mental Health Providers**

Uploaded by: Maryland Coalition To Reform School Discipline (CRSD)

Position: FAV



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# MARYLAND COALITION TO REFORM SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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## WAYS AND MEANS SENATE BILL 0482: JANET L. HOFFMAN LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM- - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

February 22, 2023

**POSITION: Support**

The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD) brings together advocates, service providers, and community members dedicated to transforming school discipline practices within Maryland's public school systems. To this end, CRSD advocates for the expansion of proactive measures to improve school climate and expand the equitable delivery of school mental health services and student behavioral supports. **CRSD SUPPORTS Senate Bill 0482, which would expand the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals** serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools; and requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

The Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD) supports SB0482 for the following reasons:

- **Maryland is experiencing a substantial increase in student mental health needs.** Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 143,000 children in the State of Maryland developed anxiety and/or depression<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 53 million individuals met the diagnostic criteria for a mental illness in 2020 (SAMHSA<sup>2</sup>). Unaddressed mental health needs negatively impact school culture and climate and student outcomes.
- **There is a critical shortage of mental health professionals.** Districts statewide are unable to recruit and hire enough qualified mental health professionals to do this critical work. Baltimore City School social workers are currently overwhelmed as reflected by the 1 to 362 ratio, only 44.8% of the recommended number.<sup>3</sup>
- **Lack of diverse providers that reflect student populations:** 63% of all new social workers are white and financial challenges disproportionately impact minorities and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2022-10-25/heres-what-baltimores-public-schools-are-doing-to-combat-a-mental-health-crisis>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105250>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2022-10-25/heres-what-baltimores-public-schools-are-doing-to-combat-a-mental-health-crisis>

people of color<sup>4</sup>. This bill would directly address these financial challenges to promote equity of access to advanced degrees and certification needed by mental health providers.

- **Difficult to retain qualified (and diverse) providers.** Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the “Great Resignation” schools are struggling to hire and retain employees due to non-competitive pay. This bill would address this challenge, also creating a pipeline of veteran providers to mentor younger clinicians.
- **Critical compliment to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.** One of the Blueprint’s major focuses is to expand mental health services (Pillar 4). The Blueprint establishes teacher and administrator pipelines, to address competitive pay concerns. This bill incentivizes mental health providers to enter and remain in the school setting

**For these reasons, CRSD supports Senate Bill 0482.**

For more information contact:

Emily Ames-Messinger & Spencer Hall, Co-chairs

Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline

[CRSDMaryland@gmail.com](mailto:CRSDMaryland@gmail.com)

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2262/New-Report-Provides-Insights-into-New-Social-Workers-Demographics-Income-and-Job-Satisfaction>

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## MARYLAND COALITION TO REFORM SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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### **CRSD Members**

ACLU of Maryland

The Choice Program at UMBC

Center for Dispute Resolution, Univ. of Maryland Law School

Center for Hope

Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC)

Disability Rights Maryland

Maryland Office of the Public Defender

Public Justice Center

Positive Schools Center, University of Maryland School of Social Work

Project HEAL at the Kennedy Krieger Institute

League of Women Voters Maryland

Youth, Education, and Justice Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law

Spencer M. Hall, Esq.

# **CE Ball 2023 - SB 482 Janet Hoffman Loan Assistanc**

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive  
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov  
FAX 410-313-3051

February 22, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: SB 482: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I commend Senator Lewis Young for introducing Senate Bill 482 which would expand the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in our public schools.

As County Executive and a former educator, I understand the power of education provides critical pathways to advancement. However, none of that would be possible without the hard work and dedication of educators who work to ensure bright futures for the next generation. Expanding the loan repayment program to mental health professionals serving our schools will help retain and attract our most talented experts while also acknowledging the critical role they play in students' overall well-being.

We remain committed to strengthening community-based mental health resources and long-term investments in supporting the needs of our educators and schools throughout Howard County. In 2021, I announced nearly \$2 million in funding for enhanced mental health services to ensure that all 78 of our schools would have the funding for direct access to a social worker.

Last October, I announced \$1.5 million in funding for a student loan assistance program for those who commit to teaching in the Howard County Public School System to help attract and retain the highest quality teachers. This comes on top of our commitment of \$16 million in retention bonuses received by educators in the past year and \$1 billion investment in the school systems FY23 budget.

Now more than ever, it is critical to ensure the academic success and access to mental health care services for our students. In order to do this, we must commit to supporting the professionals who serve them and our communities.

I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on SB 482.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive

**SB482 testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Mills

Position: FAV

February 22, 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

NAMI supports public policies and laws that enable all schools, public and private, to increase access to appropriate mental health services. Undiagnosed, untreated, or inadequately treated mental illnesses in children can significantly interfere with a student's ability to learn, grow and develop. Since children spend much of their productive time in educational settings, schools offer a unique opportunity for early identification, prevention, and interventions that serve students where they already are. School-based mental health services can help students access needed services during the school-day.

School-based mental health services are delivered by trained mental health professionals who are employed by schools, such as school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, and school nurses. We recognize that serious shortages exist in the mental health professional workforce. By offering loan repayment for school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators through an expansion of the Janet L. Hoffman program, we are incentivizing the recruitment and retainment of mental health professionals in public schools. Offering tuition repayment will allow individuals to enter and stay in the workforce—leading to a better system of care.

Early identification and effective treatment for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental health conditions. We must take steps that enable all schools to increase access to appropriate mental health services. Schools can play an important role in helping children and youth get help early. Early treatment is effective and can help young people stay in school and on track to achieving their life goals. In fact, the earlier the treatment, the better the outcomes and lower the costs. By retaining mental health professionals in schools, we can offer our children the mental health care they deserve.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

# **MPA Testimony 2023 - Support - Senate Bill 482 - J**

Uploaded by: Pat Savage

Position: FAV





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Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 13, 2023

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

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, is writing to express **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 482**, which has the potential to increase access to critically important behavioral health services delivered to school children in Maryland.

Addressing the behavioral health needs of Maryland's school children is an essential role for our public schools – students perform better academically, and grow up to be better-functioning adults, when these needs are met along the way. School systems struggle to find enough qualified behavioral health professionals to meet the increasingly high demand for their services. Adding school psychologists to the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Program will enable more of these well-trained school-employed behavioral health professionals to be available to Maryland students. We strongly **SUPPORT** SB 482, and request that the bill receives a favorable report.

The Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Program is open to a wide variety of professionals employed in Maryland by a state agency, nonprofit, or local government serving high needs populations, including both low-income populations and high-needs geographic areas. Beyond our public schools, many of these other employers are also experiencing serious shortages of behavioral health staff, including psychologists. In order to expand citizen access to behavioral health services across the state, in the near future we would hope that the program can be expanded to include licensed psychologists.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 482. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).  
Respectfully submitted,

*Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.*  
Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.  
President

**R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.**  
R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

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**BTU Testimony SB0482.pdf**

Uploaded by: Timothy Ferrell

Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO  
Seton Business Park  
5800 Metro Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0482

Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

February 22, 2023

2:00pm

**The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 0482**, which would expand the purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools; and requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,595 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

The Baltimore Teachers Union currently represents 202 school social workers and 124 school psychologists. These clinical professionals provide a comprehensive continuum of services that support students both with and without identified disabilities. Since the forced closure of schools in March 2020, the school psychologists and social workers employed by Baltimore City Public Schools have worked tirelessly to ensure students and their families did not experience a disruption in support and services from school district-employed providers. School psychologists and social workers stepped up to adapt their service delivery to the virtual setting, adapting lessons and curricula to meet students' needs. They also provided practical support care through food deliveries and donation, furniture donations for families to help students create at-home learning spaces, and helping families secure childcare for parents who were essential workers, and housing assistance for students and families at risk of homelessness.

School psychologists and social workers never stopped working even when our school buildings closed, and while the thanks and gratitude expressed by the families and students they serve is

comforting, it does not help school psychologists and social workers lessen the emotional and financial stress they experience as a result of student loan debt. School social workers are required to have at minimum a masters degree to practice in schools. School psychologists have to complete at minimum two years of graduate training and a third year completing a full-time internship. In Baltimore City, several of our district-employed school psychologists hold a Doctoral degree.

Our school psychologists and social workers have spent years preparing for their careers in schools. And yet, the average school psychologist salary in Maryland is only \$88,610, while the average school social worker salary in Maryland is estimated around \$58,000. The financial reality for many school psychologists and social workers is one of hardship, tightening family budgets, and limited career growth opportunities. These factors make it difficult for school psychologists and social workers to provide for their basic needs, let alone pay down the large amount of debt many incur in receiving the training necessary to practice in schools.

School psychologists and social workers deserve to be included in the opportunity to apply for student loan debt relief through the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program, an opportunity that is already available to our colleagues. **It is for these reasons that the BTU supports Senate Bill 0482 and urges a favorable report.**

**SB 0482 FAV OCE Testimony JF LS23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Victoria Venable

Position: FAV



**FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Jessica Fitzwater  
*County Executive*

**SB 0482 - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools**

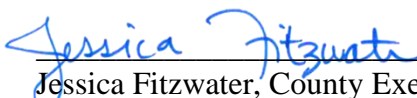
**DATE:** February 22, 2023  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**POSITION:** Favorable  
**FROM:** The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give SB 0482 - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools a favorable report. This bill will expand the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in our public schools.

My experience as a teacher in Frederick County Public Schools showed me the importance of mental health services in our schools. Now, as the Frederick County Executive, I am working hard with healthcare leaders in the County and across the state to address the shortage of mental health professionals in our community. Expanding the loan repayment program to mental health professionals serving within our schools will help our schools improve recruitment and retention, ensuring our students have access to the mental health experts they need.

Frederick County, like communities across the country, has faced challenges in meeting the demand for health care services during and after the pandemic. In fact, the federal government has designated areas of Frederick County as Health Professional Shortage Areas in mental health.<sup>1</sup> Recent research from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that youth mental health continues to steadily decline. Their 2022 report “Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report: 2011 – 2021” identifies schools as the best setting for early intervention.<sup>2</sup> Investing in community-based sources of care within our schools will not only improve outcomes for our students but will provide needed support to our educators.

SB 0482 is a commonsense change that will help support the dedicate mental health providers who play a critical role in the wellbeing of our students and community. Thank you for your consideration of SB 0482. I urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive  
Frederick County, MD

<sup>1</sup> [HPSA Find \(hrsa.gov\)](https://www.hrsa.gov)

<sup>2</sup> [Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2021 \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov)

# **NASW Maryland - 2023 SB 482 FAV - Behavioral Health**

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FWA



**Testimony before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Senate Bill 482: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program –  
Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools**

**\*\*Support\*\*  
February 22, 2023**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Social Work in Schools Committee, we would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 482: Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools.

NASW is the largest national organization of the profession, representing over 120,000 social workers nationwide, with 16,000 licensed in the state of Maryland. The Maryland Chapter's Social Work in Schools committee has 39 members who serve in public schools from Allegheny County to the Eastern Shore and from the Pennsylvania line to St. Mary's County. MSDE reports over 600 social workers employed by Maryland schools, with the number growing every year.

Schools provide a unique access point to meet the critical mental health needs of students so that they are emotionally available to profit from instruction. A Master's degree is required to be MSDE-certificated as a School Social Worker in Maryland and school social workers are often assigned to more than one school, usually beginning their professional career with higher student loan debt than their teaching peers. Behavioral health needs occur in children across the socioeconomic spectrum, so it has been nearly impossible for most school social workers to qualify for student debt relief under the current provisions of the Hoffman Loan Assistance Program's guidelines for teachers, which required full-time placement in a school with a Free and Reduced Meal rate of 75%.

Since there just aren't enough of us to meet existing needs, it is critical that we do what we can to attract and retain qualified individuals to serve our students and their families. Senate Bill 482 is a critical step in the right direction, and we urge you to return a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Gail L. Martin, LCSW-C  
Chair, Social Work in Schools Committee  
NASW-MD Chapter

**2023 LCPCM SB 482 Senate Side FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FWA



**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 482

**Title:** Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

**Hearing Date:** February 22, 2023

**Position:** Favorable with Amendment

---

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *Senate Bill 482 – Education, Energy, and the Environment*. The bill establishes permanent eligibility for mental health professionals in schools to participate in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

LCPCM supports this bill as part of the strategy to address health professional shortages in schools. We would like to request an amendment to clarify that licensed clinical professional counselors (LCPCs) would be included in the new eligibility category of “Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools.” LCPCs may already participate in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program if they meet the criteria of working in an underserved area.<sup>i</sup>

On page 2 in line 10 insert “LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR” after “SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR”

We ask for a favorable report with this amendment. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>i</sup> [https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog\\_larp.aspx](https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_larp.aspx)

**2023 MASBHC SB 482 Senate Side FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FWA



**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

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

**Hearing Date:** February 22, 2023

**Position:** Favorable with Amendment

---

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) supports *Senate Bill 482 – Education, Energy, and the Environment*. The bill establishes permanent eligibility for mental health professionals in schools to participate in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

MASBCH supports this bill as part of the strategy to address health professional shortages in schools. We would like to request an amendment to require sufficient funding in future fiscal years. The Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program is an important program to support those working in public service or serving underrepresented populations. Adding additional qualifying professions will further burden the Program’s limited resources.

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

# 2023 MOTA SB 482 House Side FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FWA



# Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ [mota-members.com](http://mota-members.com)

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

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

**Hearing Date:** February 22, 2023

**Position:** Favorable with Amendment

---

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association supports *Senate Bill 482 – Education, Energy, and the Environment*. The bill establishes permanent eligibility for mental health professionals in schools to participate in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

As members of the behavioral health team at schools, we strongly support this measure as part of the strategy to address the shortage of behavioral health professionals in schools. This is evidenced by recent reports that 1 in 3 adolescent girls have considered suicide.<sup>1</sup>

We would like to request an amendment to clarify that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are included in the program:

On page 2 in line 10 insert “occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant” after “SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR”

We ask for a favorable report with this amendment. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/p0213-yrbs.html>

**2023 MSCA SB 482 Senate Side FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FWA



**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>

**2 - SB 482 - EEE - MACHO - LOSWA.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FWA



**2023 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL:** SB 482 – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**POSITION:** Letter of Support with Amendments  
**BILL ANALYSIS:** SB 482 expands purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include repayment assistance of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in public schools and requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruitment and retention.

**POSITION RATIONALE:** The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) is in support of SB 482 with the below listed amendments. In some counties, particularly in rural areas, local health departments are the primary providers of behavioral healthcare for students. Public health officials are concerned that as an unintended consequence, SB 482 will make it more difficult for local health departments to recruit and retain licensed behavioral health staff. In many jurisdictions, protecting the behavioral health of school-aged children requires a collaborative effort to mitigate the impact of trauma, respond to the early symptoms of mental illness, and intervene when the signs of substance use arise. To ensure every child has access to quality behavioral health services no matter where they live, MACHO respectfully suggests the following amendments for consideration:

**We respectfully recommend amending Page 2, Line 9 to read:**

**(D) “MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL ~~EMPLOYED SERVING IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, RESOURCE PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOLOGIST COORDINATOR, SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORKER SUPERVISOR, OR MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR, OR A LICENSED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYED BY A LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.~~**

**and**

**We respectfully recommend amending Page 3, Line 22 to read:**

**(2) A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL *IDENTIFIED IN 18-1501 (D)* WHO HAS ~~BEEN EMPLOYED SERVED~~ IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR.**

Schools are a natural setting for partnerships, and in many jurisdictions, school-based behavioral health services are provided by employees of local health departments. Their presence in schools is critical to support early, ongoing, and sustainable intervention, and in some communities these clinicians may be the only accessible source of care. Additionally, the integration of non-school clinicians into school-based services supports continuity of care by also providing access to care during holidays, extended breaks, and summer recess.

Like many sectors of healthcare, there are workforce shortages across all levels of behavioral health licensure. Recruiting well-educated and well-trained staff to provide critical services in a public setting has become increasingly difficult when faced with the lure of private sector or federal agencies salaries or workloads. For workforce shortage areas, such as rural communities or low-income neighborhoods, unfilled vacancies mean a reduction in services, delays in care and ultimately a disservice to our children.

*Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee*  
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*MACHO LOS WA*  
*Page 2*

Programs such as the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program are commendable and support opportunity and incentivize public service. However, these programs should not put partner agencies at a competitive disadvantage as they work to serve the same communities.

These small changes to the bill would expand access to the program, improve the ability of underserved communities to recruit, develop and retain staff, and achieve the goal of ensuring an effective workforce to serve at-risk children in our schools. For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support with amendments for SB 482. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at [rmaiora1@jhu.edu](mailto:rmaiora1@jhu.edu) or 410-937-1433.

# Testimony\_SB0482.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Lang

Position: UNF

## Testimony SB0482

If there is to be loan assistance for people entering into a profession then it should be egalitarian and open to everyone, instead of restricted to certain professions. Furthermore the general state of education shows that if loans and loan forgiveness programs are encouraged then the educational facilities will raise their tuition rates, making the loans and programs increasingly essential.

Specific to this bill, I do not want mental health professionals in public schools. It seems superfluous at best, deleterious in all likelihood, and a tremendous expense to impose on our already massive--yet strained--school budgets.

# **Senate Bill 482 MHEC Letter of Information 0222202**

Uploaded by: Lee Towers

Position: INFO



Wes Moore  
Governor

Aruna Miller  
Lt. Governor

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D.  
Chair

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 482

**Position:** Letter of Information

**Title:** Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

**Hearing Date:** February 22, 2023

**Bill Summary:**

Senate Bill 482 expands the purpose of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include assisting in the repayment of loans for mental health professionals serving as school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, or mental health coordinators in the public schools. It requires the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) to publicize the Program to eligible mental health professionals to help recruit and retain mental health professionals in the public schools.

**Information:**

Senate Bill 482 would expand the “eligible fields of employment” for this program to specifically include the following positions:

“(D) “MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, RESOURCE PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOLOGIST COORDINATOR, SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORKER SUPERVISOR, OR MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR.”

This addition clarifies the Legislature’s intent for which positions to include in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program. In addition, it will expand the eligibility for this specific group to allow those now eligible to have graduated from “any accredited college or university.” Requirements for those currently eligible for this program is limited to those who received their graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from a college or university in the State of Maryland.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss the proposed bill and information provided here. Please contact Mr. Al Dorsett, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance at [al.dorsett@maryland.gov](mailto:al.dorsett@maryland.gov), for more information.