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2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 13, 2023

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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.

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
