



Bill: **House Bill 515 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills - Requirements**

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, 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 wellbeing of students and families across the state.

We support the changes to the Education Article proposed in House Bill 515 as they relate to active shooter/assailant drills in public schools. [According to the Best Practice Considerations For Armed Assailant Drills In Schools](#) document published jointly by the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Resource Officers, drills must be planned and implemented carefully so as to ensure the proper level of readiness, while balancing the potential trauma that could result from these drills. The changes proposed in HB515 align with these best practices. Specifically, the bill would ensure that drills, unless voluntary and after school hours, do not use sounds intended to imitate gunfire or explosions, role-playing as an active shooter or victim, and other potentially traumatic activities. The bill also ensures that students and staff would have access to emotional support as appropriate before, during, and after a drill, taking into account individual student needs.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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