



Office of the President

**Morgan State University Testimony
Dr. David K. Wilson, President**

House Bill 375 (Delegate Attar)
Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 29, 2023

Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. We, at Morgan, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on House Bill 375. The summary of the Bill states the following: *Requiring the State Department of Education to develop guidelines for public schools and the Maryland Higher Education Commission to develop guidelines for public institutions of higher education to train coaches in providing mental health first aid to students who participate in athletic programs in public schools and public institutions of higher education; requiring public schools and public institutions that offer athletic programs to provide mental health first aid training to coaches; etc.*

Morgan State University is the preeminent public urban research university in Maryland, known for its excellence in teaching, intensive research, effective public service and community engagement. Morgan prepares diverse and competitive graduates for success in a global interdependent society.

Morgan State favors House Bill 375.

Morgan State University is a strong proponent of this bill because it aligns with our *Strategic Goals to Promote Student Success and Well-being* across our campus community. Requiring coaches to become trained in Mental Health First Aid will assist our public schools and higher education institutions and connect our youth and college student athletes to the resources they need to address their mental health needs.

One of the main concerns confronting K-12 and post-secondary institutions of higher learning is trying to address the trauma related issues that manifested itself as a result of the Pandemic.

Educators, counselors, coaches, parents and families, and various health care entities are struggling to keep up with the growing demands of responding to the mental health needs of our youth and adult communities.

Athletics serves as a unifying entity for many public schools, colleges, universities, and local communities and coaches often have relationships with student athletes that are very trustworthy and respectful.

Morgan has been supportive of mental health improvements for many years. Morgan State, and other HBCUs in Maryland, is currently in partnership with Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) to train faculty, staff and students to understand the signs of mental health and enhance Mental Health Literacy of our faculty, staff, and students.

Requiring coaches to become trained in Mental Health First Aid will only strengthen our support for our student athletes.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. David K. Wilson
President, Morgan State University