

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
Legislative District 3  
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Committee on Education, Energy,  
and the Environment



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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, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young