

February 26, 2023

To the distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Martin Kerrigan and I am the Chairperson of the Maryland Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board. I am writing to ask for a favorable vote on Senate Bill 388, Standardized Behavioral Health Questionnaire for Students - Development and Implementation.

In addition to my role as Chairperson of the Maryland Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board I am also a career special educator for over 20 years. I have both a graduate and post graduate degree in special education with an emphasis in acquired brain injury. In 2017 there were 4,794 Emergency Department visits and 210 hospitalizations for Marylanders ages 0–18 years old with a diagnosis of TBI. At the same time the total number of Maryland students aged birth through 21 receiving special education services with the diagnosis of traumatic brain injury is less than 220. These numbers have remained consistent for the last 15 years.

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report to Congress “The Management of Traumatic Brain Injury in Children: Opportunities for Action.” According to the report “it is widely recognized that children with brain injury are under-identified for health and educational services and under-served by existing supports, placing them at risk for poor health and educational outcomes. Understanding the gaps in care and developing approaches for optimal assessment, access to services, and service delivery is critical to ensuring that children with TBI have the best possible treatment and outcomes.” The report states that a cause of the inability to access available educational services includes “The potential under-identification of students with TBI for special education services.”

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the total number of students receiving special education services under the disability code traumatic brain injury suggests that fewer than 20% of students who likely need services are actually receiving them.

Maryland is a leader in public education. It is one of our strongest resources. By screening for behavioral health concerns, including traumatic brain injury, we can provide some of our most vulnerable citizens with what they are entitled to, a free and appropriate public education.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, I can be reached by phone at 443-756-3419 and by email at [mwkerri1@gmail.com](mailto:mwkerri1@gmail.com). Thank you so much and I look forward to a positive vote on SB 388 Standardized Behavioral Health Questionnaire for Students - Development and Implementation.

Respectfully,

Martin Kerrigan  
Maryland Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board

Chairperson,

