



TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Karen Lewis Young

FROM: Christine K. Krone
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DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 482 – *Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Mental Health Professionals in Public Schools*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and the Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition (MdCSWC) submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 482.

Senate Bill 482 expands the list of eligible professions that qualify for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) to include mental health professionals. The bill defines “mental health professional” as including a school psychologist, resource psychologist, psychologist coordinator, social worker, social worker supervisor, or mental health coordinator.

MDAAP and MdCSWC support this incentive for recruiting and retaining mental health professionals to public schools in the State. Access to mental health professionals in schools promotes mental health in general, provides a positive school climate, offers prevention and early identification, and individualized services and supports. Furthermore, loan assistance repayment programs (LARP) may attract mental health professionals from neighboring states that currently do not offer assistance repayment programs. Recipients of Maryland’s Janet L. Hoffman LARP can receive up to \$30,000 (installments of \$10,000 annually for 3 years) for loan repayment where the total debt exceeds \$75,001. That is a significant percentage of debt that can be covered for serving as a mental health professional in a Maryland public school. For these reasons, MDAAP and MdCSWC urge a favorable report.