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March 21, 2023

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Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West,

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 185 - Nonpublic Schools and Child Care Providers - Corporal Punishment - Prohibition

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in SUPPORT of **House Bill 185 - Nonpublic Schools and Child Care Providers - Corporal Punishment - Prohibition**, which would extend the current ban on corporal punishment in public schools to all non-public schools and childcare centers in Maryland.

Corporal punishment is ineffective and potentially dangerous, with substantial risk of abuse and of both short-term and long-term harm to the child. Recognizing this fact, the General Assembly wisely banned this practice in our public schools in 1993. Research evidence has repeatedly shown that the use of corporal punishment in children ultimately results in less compliance and increases in children's aggressive and antisocial behavior. Some studies have shown that these adverse impacts are worse for boys than for girls, and children of color may be particularly vulnerable to the overuse of punitive methods in some schools. In addition, use of corporal punishment has been associated with more mental-health problems. In particular, the more frequently or severely that children are spanked or hit, the more likely they are to have symptoms of depression or anxiety, both at the time they are corporally punished and in the future.

Highly effective alternative behavior management programs and methodologies already exist, and they can be readily implemented to replace corporal punishment in our schools and child care centers. As one evidence-based example, many Maryland schools are using the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system of multi-tiered programming to help all children develop effective emotional and behavioral habits in school. Many of our public school systems have implemented such programs, and it is time for our non-public schools and child care centers to eliminate corporal punishment and to implement more effective behavior management practices. We urge a favorable report on this important legislation.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 185. If we can be of any further assistance as the Senate – Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.

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R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

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cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs