



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A • Odenton, Maryland 21113

Phone: 410.551.1517 • Email: mrspa@mrspa.org

www.mrspa.org

House Bill 00271

In Support Of

9-8-8 Trust Fund - Funding

Hearing: Health and Government Operations

February 7, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Delegate Josaline Pena-Melnyk, Chair, and Honorable Delegate Ariana Kelly, Vice Chair, and the Health and Government Operations Committee members,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) supports HB 0271 9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding.

HB 0271 provides that in fiscal year 2025, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$12,000,000 to the 9–8–8 Trust Fund. This appropriation would support the Trust Funds' efforts in developing and implementing a statewide initiative for the coordination and delivery of the continuum of behavioral health crisis response services in the State, including: (i) Crisis call centers; (ii) Mobile crisis team services; (iii) Crisis stabilization centers; and (iv) Other acute behavioral health care services.

It has become far too clear that we are experiencing a significant mental and behavioral health crisis. The establishment of the 988 emergency services number for mental health crises demonstrates that this is a national issue. The establishment of this 9-8-8 Trust Fund is essential to ensuring that Marylanders will have access to the necessary and immediate response to their behavioral and mental health emergencies. At least one in five older Americans has a mental health condition. Among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, the most common mental disorders are depression, anxiety, dementia, and other neurocognitive impairments. By 2030, the number of older people with such disorders is expected to double.

The need is clear and immediate. On behalf of the over 12,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we urge your favorable support of HB271 9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding.

Sincerely,

Carla J. Duls
President

Virginia G. Crespo
Legislative Aide