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SHERIFF MAXWELL C. UY

February 13, 2023

VIA E-MAIL: jared.solomon@house.state.md.us

Honorable Jared Solomon
222 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 515 – Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills Requirements

Dear Delegate Solomon:

This letter confirms my stated support for enactment of HB 515. As you know, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is actively involved in promoting school safety and staffs a Community Engagement Officer (CEO) at Magruder High School. In our view, the proposed legislation contains valuable enhancements to the current status of the Maryland Center for School Safety and current school safety programs as they relate to active shooter drills.

First, I think the requirement to study the effectiveness and impact of active shooter drills by researching and analyzing data collected from local school systems provides an essential mandate to continually improve such drills by using a data-based approach that allows for an annual evaluation and updates in the model policy. Second, I think the provision for increasing mental health services for students and school staff who need such services before, during and after such active shooter drills will go far to allay the fears of parents and staff who may be particularly vulnerable to the notion of active shooter drills generally. Third, I am particularly pleased that the bill provides notification procedures for parents at the beginning of the school year and a requirement that any active school drill procedure occurring during school hours must be developmentally and age-appropriate, as well as avoid specific scenarios – loud sounds imitating gun fire or explosions and role playing – that may be disturbing and traumatic for students and school personnel. In my view, all of these legislative changes can only improve the active shooter drills currently utilized, and enhance public support, especially that of parents, that is essential for the overall success of such drills.

In sum, MCSO supports this legislative effort to enhance the requirements for active shooter drills in schools. Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maxwell C. Uy
Sheriff