

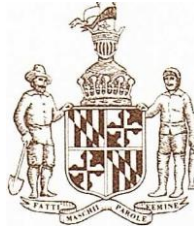
**TERRI L. HILL, M.D.**

Legislative District 12A  
Howard County

Health and Government  
Operations Committee

*Subcommittees*  
Government Operations and  
Health Facilities

Public Health and Minority  
Health Disparities



*Annapolis Office*  
The Maryland House of Delegates 6  
Bladen Street, Room 404  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

410-841-3378 · 301-858-3378  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3378  
Fax 410-841-3197 · 301-858-3197

[Terri.Hill@house.state.md](mailto:Terri.Hill@house.state.md)

## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### SUPPORT

#### **HB1054** – School and Health Vision Services – Screenings and Eye Examinations

March 1, 2023

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice-chair Wilkins and Committee Members,

THE BUCK STOPS HERE, or at least it should. That is why **HB1054** is introduced.

THE PROBLEM – Many Maryland primary and secondary school children with vision problems never receive the glasses necessary for them to see well enough to read well enough to learn. **HB1054** underscores and builds on the commitment we made to our children and all Marylanders when we implemented the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

**HB1054**, the work product of a multi-stakeholder groups including ophthalmologists, optometrists, representatives of the local school boards, State superintendents, state local public health officers, state and local libraries, vision advocates, and community service organizations, would:

- Establish the Vision for Maryland (V4MD) program, a collaborative between the Maryland Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Health. V4MD's role is to identify resources and partners throughout the state to successfully fill the gaps in pediatric vision care by providing vision exams and prescribed glasses to students with vision support needs who have fallen through the cracks, and to connect them with local providers and resources for ongoing and long-term follow-up and care management.
- Establish the Pediatric Vision Program, modeled on voluntary reporting of eye exam results to the Maryland Motor Vehicle Association, to facilitate reporting of eye exam findings and identify students and families in need of direction and support to get the needed vision aids.
- Add one of two recommended additional vision screenings for public school students.
- Standardize, based on jurisdictional best practices, the information shared with families regarding vision screenings, vision exams, and resources available for obtaining medically indicated exams and glasses.
- Modify the school registration and intake health forms to better identify whether students with identified health needs are having those needs addressed.
- Require a needs study be conducted upon which recommendations would be made on how best to implement and expand the Vision for Maryland program to every jurisdiction and ensure that every student needing eye exams or glasses is able to receive them, whether through insurance, philanthropy, or state resources.
- A with local resources, and with the Vision for Baltimore subsidiary of Vision to Learn to expand the current programs that are so that every jurisdiction will have what they need to ensure that no child needing glass is without a way of receiving them.

The sponsor amendments, clarify that the neither the local school system nor state is acting without the collaboration and approval of the parents or guardian, that the criteria upon which decisions about the need for

exams or glasses are set by appropriate medical authorities, that the appropriate stakeholders are involved with both the needs study and the implementation of the Vision for Maryland program, move the date by which the stakeholder group is convened to December 2023, and correct the Senate and House Committees to which reports are to be given.

**HB1054** mandates an appropriation to cover the cost to local jurisdictions of additional eye screenings and a separate minimal annual appropriation for the implementation of the Vision for Maryland program, which would be modified after completion of the needs study. This will be money well invested, inarguably much lower cost than the costs associated with education failure, and qualifies for funding under the Blueprint. Across socioeconomic levels, 30% to 70% of students who fail vision screenings fail to either get the vision exams to diagnose the problem or the glasses needed to correct it. The reasons vary, but the result is the same: Johnny (or Jannie) can't learn if they can't read! By making sure that students needing glasses get them, we make a small upstream investment in huge downstream benefits for the students, the community, and our state.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on **HB1054** as amended.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. L. P.", written in a cursive style.