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February 17, 2023

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**RE: House Bill 733 – Youth Sports Safety Commission**

**SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the House Ways and Means Committee to **FAVORABLY REPORT** on House Bill 733.

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The Maryland Psychological Association supports the intent of House Bill 733 to protect the mental and physical well-being of the children, under the age of 15, who live in Maryland and participate in sports. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention about 57% of high school students play on at least one organized sports team each year. 2019 about sixty thousand boys and fifty-one thousand girls played sports in Maryland. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations the most popular sport played by girls is soccer, while football is most popular amongst boys.

Participation in sports offers many benefits to those students who participate but they also risk injury. National statistics suggest that 11.6% of those who play will suffer an injury meaning that about thirteen hundred injuries will occur in Maryland each year related to a child's participation in sports. Brain injuries can be the most significant injuries associated with youth sports.

The inclusion of a broad scope of medical specialists including those intimately familiar with brain injuries and the mental health fallout from injuries in general is a wise decision. We particularly applaud the inclusion of a psychologist selected by the Maryland Psychological Association to be a member of the commission. We urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 733.

Thank you for considering our comments on House Bill 733. If we can be of any further assistance as the House – Ways and Means Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

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Respectfully submitted,

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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