

TERESA E. REILLY
Legislative District 35A
Cecil and Harford Counties

DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and
Long Term Care

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

Rules and Executive
Nominations Committee

Chair

Harford County House Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 325
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3278 · 301-858-3278
800-492-7122 Ext. 3278
Fax 410-841-3190 · 301-858-3190
Teresa.Reilly@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 961 – State Department of Education – School Psychologist Recruitment Program

March 1, 2023

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

HB 961 would establish a School Psychologist Recruitment Program in the Maryland State Department of Education to provide professional support to individuals who are, or seeking to become, school psychologists in the State of Maryland.

It is vitally important that we work together to offer Maryland's children the psychological support they require by increasing the numbers of school psychologists. A 2021 study from the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a 500:1 ratio of students to school psychologists. The most recent data available in our state determined that the Maryland State average was a 1200:1 ratio—well below our target and therefore failing to meet the needs of our students.

I consider this bill to be a workforce development bill. My bill from 2019, **HB 844- Public Schools – School Psychologists – Reports**, formed a task force to study the scope of this challenge. That study found that in Maryland, job openings for school psychologists were available and school districts had money budgeted to pay for them, but a lack of candidates led to unacceptably low numbers of new hires. HB 961 will grow the school psychologist workforce by offering supports and incentives to those that are either already in the field or are training to become certified. This will provide our most vulnerable students with the psychological services they require in order to succeed with their academic pursuits.

Beyond recruitment of new school psychologists, this Program would be required to maintain a clearinghouse of school psychologist best practices while also communicating and promoting upcoming opportunities and available resources to school psychologists.

The Program would also reimburse school psychologists who attend approved professional conferences. Additionally, the Program will pay the school psychologist certification fee for up to 100 individuals seeking certification.

Passage of this bill would provide support for these qualified individuals that are so desperately needed when our children throughout the State of Maryland need accurate IEPs or access to services to address issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and bullying.

Maryland children deserve the best psychologists available, and HB 961 goes a long way to achieving that end.

I respectfully ask for a FAVORABLE report from the Committee.

Delegate Teresa E. Reilly
District 35A
Cecil and Harford Counties