

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 515
Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills - Requirements**

**Ways and Means Committee
February 15, 2023**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 515, which would measure the efficacy of active shooter drills in schools, provide support to students and educators during active shooter drills, and protect students and educators from trauma associated with active shooter drills. Maryland's schools must take active steps to ensure the mental health of our students and educators.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

House Bill 515 establishes important guardrails to active shooter drills in schools, including the requirement to notify parents and students in advance of drills, precludes the use of live action simulations that mimic a shooter or gun fire, and requires additional mental health support for students and educators who may need additional support during or after a drill. The bill also requires local school systems to collect data on the effectiveness and impact of active shooter drills based on feedback from students, parents, and educators. Local school systems must report this data to the Maryland Center for School Safety. The Maryland Center for School Safety must utilize this data to study and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of active shooter drills in collaboration with an institution of higher education. Finally, the bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education to collaborate with a variety of



important stakeholders to develop model content that informs parents of the state's firearm storage laws and best practices for firearm storage.

MSEA believes these reasonable measures are carefully designed to protect students and educators from unnecessary mental harm that may arise from active shooter drills. Ninety-five percent of public schools in the U.S. utilize drill procedures for lockdowns, but research has not conclusively affirmed the value of these drills for prevention of school shootings or protecting individuals when a school shooting does occur.¹ In light of these findings, it is important for communities, schools, and policymakers to evaluate the efficacy of these drills balanced against the anxiety and mental health issues that students and educators may incur as a result.. House Bill 515 establishes a solid foundation to address and evaluate these issues.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 515.

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety, *The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools: Time to rethink reactive school safety strategies* (9/3/2020) (last updated: 12/19/2021), https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/?_gl=1*14llmou*_ga*ODkyNjY3NzM1LjE2NzYxNDE1OTk.*_ga_LT0FWV3EK3*MTY3NjE0NzZzOC4zLjAuMTY3NjE0NzZzOC4wLjAuMA..