



January 29, 2023

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
House Ways & Means Committee
House Office Building - Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – HB 69: Education - Student Behavior - Parent Notice and Required Counseling (Parent Accountability Act)

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS oppose House Bill 69: Education - Student Behavior - Parent Notice and Required Counseling (Parent Accountability Act) (HB 69). Our members who work with children and unemancipated adolescents are often frustrated with parents who fail to seek counseling services for their children. HB 69, however, is a step too far.

HB 69 ignores the reality that schools and parents do not always have harmonious relationships, which in all honesty, is not always the parents' fault. In turn, some schools may use the vague definition of "disruptiveness" against parents with whom they conflict. Furthermore, accessing mental health, substance use disorder, and/or other behavioral health services is not always easy due to the many other psychosocial stressors that can take priority at any moment for some families.

Criminalizing a parent's failure to do so is myopic and an incorrect solution to the problems the bill seeks to remedy. Therefore, MPS/WPS ask this committee for an unfavorable report. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee