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February 27, 2023

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Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins, Vice Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
Room, 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 961 – Public Schools - School Psychologist Recruitment Program

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, is writing to express SUPPORT for House Bill 961 – Public Schools - School Psychologist Recruitment Program.

School psychologists provide comprehensive psychological services to Maryland's students, including counseling, consultation, and assessment, and are acutely aware of the significant mental health needs of many students. School psychologists are also critical participants in school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams. Yet school psychologists often work with very heavy caseloads, and many are spread so thinly that they simply cannot help many of the students who need their support. Since there is a severe and increasing shortage of qualified school psychologists available to work in Maryland's public schools, schools are facing an impending staffing crisis. Many school systems have openings for school psychologists that they have not been able to fill.

HB 961 will help to address this shortage by providing the Maryland State Department of Education with a mechanism for recruiting and supporting more school psychologists for our schools. For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB 961.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 961. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance as the House Education, Energy and the Environment Committee consider this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativecommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs