



Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 26th, 2024

Bill: Senate Bill 0817 - Public Safety - Missing Persons With Cognitive Impairment - Purple Alert Program

Position: Support

Dear Chair Smith Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

The Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA) - which represents about 500 Maryland school psychologists - strongly supports Senate Bill 0817 - Public Safety - Missing Persons with Cognitive Impairment - Purple Alert Program. SB 0817 will create a system to locate persons with cognitive disabilities who become missing from their caregivers. The program will help ensure such individuals' safety and help instill peace of mind amongst their families and loved ones.

As professionals serving children, youth, and young adults with educationally disabling conditions, school psychologists witness first hand the needs of individuals with cognitive disabilities as well as their families' efforts to care for them. Often members of this vulnerable population experience difficulties with judgment and communication that jeopardize their safety when separated from familiar surroundings, routines, and caregivers. Such concerns complicate efforts to locate them and can cause conflicts with members of the public who are unfamiliar with their conditions. SB 0817 will enact vital measures assisting searches for missing persons with cognitive disabilities as well as alert the public to the existence of a missing individual with those needs.

For the above reasons, MSPA strongly supports SB0817. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Leposa, PHD NCSP
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association