

Senator Pamela Beidle  
Senator Antonio Hayes  
Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Bill: SB 58 – Labor and Employment - Parental School Engagement Leave Act**  
**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 Maryland school psychologists. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state. School psychologists play a vital role in school communities. Our key mandated responsibilities include implementing and adhering to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (504), among others, to ensure all children can access a free and appropriate public education. The laws governing these processes require parental participation of different types. For IDEA, for example, parents must be present at certain meetings or waive their right to attend. Parent involvement is critical to uphold letter and spirit of these laws.

Although families have a right to these processes, participating fully in them comes at a cost for some parents. As most people may know, parenting a child with a disability can require substantial time and resources. As many people may *not* know, being an involved parent for a child with significant disabilities can involve frequent and sudden time off work to collaborate with school teams and respond to unexpected situations. [Research](#) confirms that nearly a third of parents of children with disabilities report changing jobs or significantly changing their schedule because of child-care / schooling needs. Worse, the odds of experiencing job instability doubled-to-tripled for parents of students with behavioral challenge. In practice, this levies an unwritten cost to parental participation - a cost that rises dramatically if your child is significantly impacted by disability. Parental difficulties maintaining employment, in turn, can trigger other difficulties (with housing, access to food, ability to maintain insurance coverage) that raise the risk of adverse outcomes for the whole family. For all families, [research](#) supports the connection between parental involvement in their children's schooling and positive developmental outcomes as well as healthy school environments.

To mitigate this hidden cost that threatens family stability, and enhance positive outcomes for all students, MSPA supports Senate Bill 58 - Parental School Engagement Leave Act. Senate Bill 58 requires employers to grant 12 hours of paid leave for parents to attend school events. This bill would therefore help soften the employment instability cost of being an involved parent for a child with disabilities. For all parents, it would support their involvement activities that are vital to schooling such as parent teacher conferences, student support team meetings, school wide programs that seek to strengthen ties between schools and surrounding communities such as positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) committee meetings, school assemblies, and events related to community schools.

Thus, for the above reasons, MSPA urges a favorable report on SB 58. If we can provide any further information or be of any assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mspaonline.org](mailto:legislative@mspaonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Laura M. Grubb PhD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura M. Grubb, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA

On behalf of the MSPA Legislative Committee