



PO Box 368 Laurel, MD 20725

410-992-4258

www.marylandpsychology.org

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February 10, 2025

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 488 – Public Schools - Discipline-Related Data - Collection and Publication

Position: Support

Dear Chair 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 in SUPPORT of House Bill 488 - Public Schools - Discipline-Related Data - Collection and Publication.

The bill addresses an important issue in our schools – disproportionate discipline outcomes for different groups of students. In some schools, Black students, students with disabilities, English-language learners and other minority students appear to be suspended and expelled at substantially higher than average rates. The bill creates a mechanism for data on this problem to be collected and made public across all schools and school systems. The “risk ratio” and “State comparison threshold” outlined in the bill would appear to facilitate interpretation of the data, holding school systems accountable and enabling schools to develop effective and measurable interventions to mitigate such disproportionality when it is identified.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 488. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of MPA’s Legislative Committee, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.
President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

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