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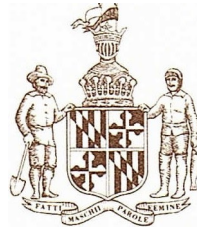
Legislative District 12A

Howard County

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

**Subcommittees**

Government Operations and  
Health Facilities  
Public Health and Minority  
Health Disparities



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**SUPPORT - HB1242**

**Primary and Secondary Students and Adults - Vision and Hearing Studies and Evaluations**

**March 05, 2025**

Chair Atterbear, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

**HB1242** addresses a fundamental problem: too many Maryland primary and secondary school children with vision problems never receive the glasses necessary for them to see well enough to read well enough to learn. The bill establishes a joint Maryland Department of Education and Department of Health workgroup to determine the prevalence of unaddressed vision and hearing difficulties among students, the resources available and efforts being made in each local jurisdiction to mitigate the problem, and outcome-based recommendations, policy, and practices to address it.

Research indicates that students with vision impairments face disparities in reading performance compared to their peers. Early intervention to enhance literacy skills could significantly improve educational outcomes for these students but are all but useless if unaddressed vision problems prevent them from reading. We are investing heavily in making the Blueprint for Maryland's Future a success. Ensuring that students who need glasses receive them is a low cost/ high impact upstream solution to improve the likelihood of their achieving academic and lifelong success.

The workgroup would be tasked with

- Studying the incidence and prevalence of vision and hearing difficulties.
- Evaluating existing policies and programs to identify service gaps;
- Assessing the impact of insurance coverage and other contributing factors;
- Reviewing screening policies and funding levels for support programs.

**HB1242** is a key step in enhancing access to vision and hearing support services across Maryland. I urge your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri Hill'.