



MARYLAND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

9175 Guilford Road, Ste 300 #1112, Columbia, MD 21046 | 410-992-4258 | www.marylandpsychology.org

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

February 16, 2026

President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Energy and The Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD. 21401

President-Elect

Peter Smith, Psy.D.

Past President

Brian Corrado, Psy.D.

Secretary

Kim Sanschagrin JD, Ph.D.

RE: SB 254 Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

Treasurer

Andrea Chisolm, Ph.D.

Position: SUPPORT

Representatives-at-large

Deborah Williams, Psy.D.
Laurie Donze, Ph.D.

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Representative to APA Council

Mary Fernandes, Ph.D.

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the House Ways and Means Committee to report FAVORABLY on SB 254.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Communications

Beatrice Gerry, Ph.D.

Human trafficking is a \$150 Billion industry, and estimates range from 27-41 million victims worldwide. It does not discriminate on race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, and it hides in plain sight. The aim of this bill, is to bring it out of the darkness, so it can no longer hide.

Diversity

Mindy Milstein, Ph.D.

Trafficking is able to thrive, because most people do not know how to identify trafficking when they see it. Youth do not know how to identify the red flags that will lure them in to trafficking schemes. Misleading information on social media makes them think traffickers are coming to kidnap them off the streets, but that is rarely the case. Trafficking is a business, and it functions by luring young people in through grooming. Middle-schoolers are the perfect age to be educated about the way traffickers operate, so that they can avoid falling in to their traps. Providing this three-year program will instill accurate and life-saving information into Maryland youth, hopefully preventing them from being lured into a life from which they may never recover.

Early Career Psychologist

Danielle Wexler, Ph.D.

Educational Affairs

Shalena Wade, Ph.D.

Ethics

LaShaun Williams, Psy.D.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 254. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D. at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Legislative

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Respectfully submitted,

Membership

Dana O'Brien, Ph.D.

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

President

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

Past Presidents Council

Steve Sobelman, Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

OFFICER

Paul C. Berman, Ph.D.

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Taylor Dickerson