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HOUSE PARLIAMENTARIAN

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Oversight Committee on Personnel

Joint Committee on Children,  
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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB1060 Primary and Secondary Schools - Petitions for Emergency Evaluation - Requirement  
for Tracking and Reporting and Study**

Hearing: March 10, 2026, 1:00pm

Chair Jheanelle Wilkins, Vice Chair Jessica Feldmark

Ways & Means Committee

House Bill 1060 focuses on improving transparency, data collection, and policy coordination surrounding the use of petitions for emergency evaluation in school settings.

Under Maryland law, a petition for emergency evaluation may be initiated when an individual is believed to present a danger to themselves or others due to a mental health crisis. These petitions are an important tool that can help connect individuals to immediate evaluation and care during a moment of crisis. However, when these petitions are initiated in school settings involving children and adolescents, we currently lack a consistent statewide system to track when they occur, why they occur, and what happens afterward.

House Bill 1060 addresses this gap by requiring the State Department of Education to develop a system for schools to track and report petitions for emergency evaluation that occur during the school year. The system will collect important information such as the reason for the petition, whether the student has an IEP or 504 plan, whether handcuffs were used during the process, and the eventual outcome of the petition to the extent known.

Schools will report this information to their county boards of education, and the Department will compile and submit statewide reports to the General Assembly. These reports will help policymakers, educators, and health professionals understand how often these petitions are being used and whether there are disparities or patterns that should be addressed.

In addition to tracking and reporting, the bill also convenes a workgroup made up of educators, mental health professionals, hospitals, law enforcement, and family advocates. The purpose of the workgroup is to study how petitions for emergency evaluation are used in school settings and to identify best practices for training, coordination, and crisis response.

This conversation is particularly important because the decision to initiate an emergency evaluation can have significant consequences for a young person. While these petitions can be life-saving when used appropriately, they must also be used carefully and consistently, with a clear understanding of the student's needs and the available mental health supports.

In some cases, an inappropriate or unnecessary emergency petition may inadvertently escalate a situation that could otherwise have been managed through school-based mental health supports.

Additionally, we must acknowledge the strain currently facing Maryland's pediatric behavioral health system. When a petition results in a hospital evaluation but no appropriate placement is available, young people may experience extended hospital stays while awaiting behavioral health services. These pediatric overstays place significant pressure on hospital emergency departments and inpatient units and can further disrupt care for children in crisis.

By collecting data and studying these practices, House Bill 1060 will help ensure that petitions for emergency evaluation are used appropriately, consistently, and in coordination with broader mental health resources available to students.

This bill does not restrict the use of emergency evaluations when they are needed or become a part of a student's academic record. Instead, it ensures that Maryland has the information, coordination, and policy guidance necessary to support students, families, schools, and health providers during mental health crises.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report for HB1060

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Delegate Stephanie Smith