



February 20, 2026

I write in strong support of House Bill 901 (HB901). This legislation is an important and practical step toward ensuring that students with autism in Maryland receive timely, appropriate educational supports without unnecessary delay.

HB901 requires local school systems to recognize a diagnosis of autism provided by a qualified medical, mental health, or educational professional and to begin providing recommended supports during the time the school conducts its own evaluation. Too often, families who have already gone through the time, expense, and emotional strain of securing a professional diagnosis encounter additional administrative barriers before their child can receive services in school. During that waiting period, students can fall behind academically and socially. HB901 addresses this gap.

Early and consistent intervention is critical for students with autism. By allowing schools to act on credible external diagnoses while completing their own assessments, this bill promotes continuity of care.

The bill also strengthens collaboration between families and schools. Parents who seek outside evaluations are advocating for their children. HB901 does not eliminate a school system's responsibility to conduct its own evaluation; rather, it ensures that students receive reasonable supports in the interim.

Finally, HB901 promotes statewide consistency and educational equity. Establishing a clear standard for how external autism diagnoses are treated will reduce disparities among districts and provide families with predictable, fair processes no matter where they live in Maryland.

HB901 is compassionate, practical, and aligned with Maryland's commitment to inclusive education. I respectfully urge you to support and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jolene Ivey  
Member At-Large  
Prince George's County Council

