



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

Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 10, 2026
Committee: Ways and Means

The Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a child or other loved one with a mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. As experienced caregivers, we provide support, guidance, and hope to people who love or care for someone with a behavioral health challenge and advocate to improve the systems they rely on.

In schools across the state, petitions for emergency evaluation are being used inappropriately, excessively, and without regard for the impact they have on students and their families. Maryland must create a system that tracks the use of these petitions and demands accountability from the school systems regarding their use or misuse of this extreme measure.

Schools use these petitions because they lack the resources to meet the needs of the students in the school building. Removing children via an emergency petition, however, cannot be the solution to a lack of resources to address the student's behavior or as a replacement to providing the services and support they need.

One parent MCF supports noted that this "[p]roposed bill could eliminate the use of emergency petitions as a means to get around educating some of the high needs students who do not have adequate resources in their current school environment. [It holds] the school system accountable to provide a free and appropriate education for all students or forces them to find an environment that can actually meet their needs."

Being removed from school via an emergency petition is traumatizing for students. They feel they are being punished instead of helped, isolated and ostracized rather than understood. Their trust in school personnel is eroded beyond repair. When a petition for an emergency evaluation is issued, the student is taken from the school either by ambulance or police car to a facility to have the evaluation conducted. Parents and caregivers often aren't notified until the child is already on their way to the facility. They have no voice in whether the child receives the evaluation, how the child reaches the facility, or who conducts the evaluation.

Schools need resources so they don't have to rely so regularly on measures of last resort. Until then, standards for accountability surrounding the use of petitions for



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emergency evaluation must be implemented for the wellbeing of every student experiencing mental health challenges while at school.

MCF urges the passage of HB1060.

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