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FAVORABLE - HB 326

Education - Maryland Center for School Safety - Anonymous Reporting System

Ways and Means Committee

Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Hearing Date: 11 FEB 2026

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes in support of **HB 326 - Education - Maryland Center for School Safety - Anonymous Reporting System**. The bill requires the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) to establish and maintain an anonymous reporting system for threats or concerning behaviours in schools in Maryland.

The Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) within the Department has supported the implementation of the current anonymous reporting system, Safe Schools Maryland (SSMD). The MJOC is the State's 24/7, 365 watch center which receives and processes reports.

MDEM's mission areas include both consequence management and disaster risk reduction. MCSS has identified anonymous reporting systems as a key component to violence prevention and risk reduction, enabling peers, classmates, and other community members to report concerning behavior *before* something happens. The anonymous component of the system assists to overcome barriers to reporting by ensuring those reporting do not have to fear retribution or being ostracized. This is a data-driven system with studies which demonstrate reduction in violence, self-harm and suicide in school systems which have implemented and sustained anonymous reporting systems.

In conclusion, MDEM urges a favorable report of **HB 326 - Education - Maryland Center for School Safety - Anonymous Reporting System**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: anna.sierra1@maryland.gov.