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**ROBERT G. CASSILLY**  
Harford County Executive



**ROBERT S. McCORD**  
Director of Administration

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February 13, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Opposition to House Bill 740 – Public Schools – School-Based Mental Health Services – Full-Time Therapist

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of the citizens of Harford County to respectfully express opposition to House Bill 740.

Harford County recognizes and strongly supports the importance of mental health services for students. Our local school system and county government have worked collaboratively to expand counseling resources, strengthen partnerships with providers, and ensure students have access to critical support services. However, while the goal of House Bill 740 is well-intentioned, the legislation would impose a significant and unfunded financial mandate on local governments.

HB 740 requires each public school to employ a full-time licensed therapist, regardless of existing local staffing models, available workforce, or funding realities. This one-size-fits-all approach removes local flexibility and shifts substantial recurring costs onto counties already managing significant budget pressures.

Counties fund a large share of local education costs, and any new state-mandated staffing requirements ultimately translate into increased local spending. The ongoing salary, benefit, recruitment, and operational costs associated with hiring full-time therapists for every school building would be significant and long-term, yet the bill provides no clear dedicated state funding source to offset these expenses.

In addition to cost concerns, local school systems are already facing workforce shortages in behavioral health professions. Mandating a specific staffing ratio without addressing the

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February 13, 2026

Page 2

availability of qualified professionals risks creating compliance challenges and unnecessary strain on school operations.

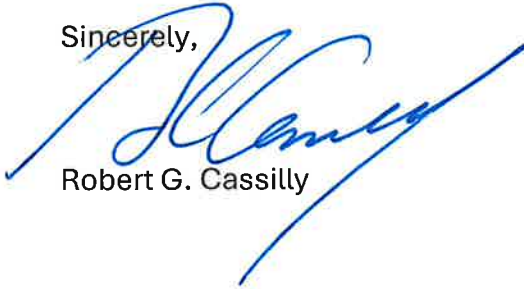
Local boards of education and county governments are best positioned to determine how mental health services should be delivered based on community needs, existing staffing models, and available resources. Harford County supports continued investment in student mental health, but we believe

these decisions should remain flexible at the local level rather than imposed through a statewide mandate.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 740.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work on behalf of Maryland's students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert G. Cassilly