

February 5, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and distinguished members of the Ways and Means Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 60,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

We fully support HB128 and urge a favorable report.

Children go through developmental phases that include changes in their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

NAMI Maryland believes that policies should enable schools, public and private, to increase access to appropriate mental health services.

Hugging and speaking with an animal who won't judge you for your feelings or thoughts is cathartic and helps people get through tough times. Research has shown that therapy dogs can reduce stress and anxiety, provide comfort and companionship, and encourage socialization.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Stephanie Slowly-Little  
Executive Director  
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

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