

HB 740: Public Schools - School-Based Mental Health Services - Full-Time Therapist:
Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to respectfully **oppose HB 740**, concerning *Public Schools – School-Based Mental Health Services – Full-Time Therapist*.

Supporting students' mental health is an important goal. However, mandating a full-time therapist in every public school raises significant concerns about cost, implementation, and local flexibility.

First, this requirement would create a substantial and ongoing financial obligation for school systems across Maryland. Many districts are already facing budget constraints, staffing shortages, and competing academic priorities. Imposing a one-size-fits-all statewide mandate may divert funding from classroom instruction, academic interventions, school safety, and other essential student services.

Second, local school systems vary widely in size, enrollment, and community needs. A blanket requirement for a full-time therapist in every school may not reflect the actual demand in smaller or rural schools, while larger schools may require multiple professionals. Decisions about staffing levels and service delivery are best made at the local level, where administrators can assess specific needs and allocate resources accordingly.

Additionally, schools already employ counselors and psychologists, who provide mental health support within an established framework. Rather than creating another mandated position, the State could focus on strengthening existing services and supporting parental involvement in student mental health decisions.

Mental health services are critical—but mandates without flexibility can lead to unintended consequences, increased costs, and inefficient allocation of limited resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 740**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals