



To: Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I oppose HB 0740 which will mandate that every school have a mental health therapist.

First, this is another unfunded mandate that the state puts on school systems. School districts are already struggling to meet the mandates of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill adds the salary and benefits for a mental health therapist for every school in a district. We know that these salaries command at least \$80,000 apiece and even more when benefits are added.

Second, the more we keep adding ancillary staff who are not focused on the mission of educating children in schools the more we dilute the focus and time on this very important mission. Schools who are forced to schedule mental health therapy around class time find this as an additional disruption to instruction in a day that is already disrupted with many distractions.

Adding a mental health therapist to the school staff will continue to degrade the rights of parents to determine the health decisions for their children. It is also a potential invasion of student and family privacy.

I ask that you vote "unfavorable" on this bill.

Sincerely,

Janet Greenhawk

Chairman, Maryland Moms for Liberty Legislative Committee

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