

HB0740\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/18/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON HB#0740 POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Schools - School-Based Mental Health Services - Full-Time Therapist**

**TO:** Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0740, **Public Schools - School-Based Mental Health Services - Full-Time Therapist**

KFF, the Kaiser Family Foundation, has studied *The Landscape of School-Based Mental Health Services*<sup>1</sup>

This analysis, originally published on September 6, 2022, was updated on September 11, 2025 to incorporate the latest developments and data.

Nearly [one in five](#) students attending public schools in the United States utilize school-based mental health services, underscoring how schools can serve as an access point for mental health treatment among youth. Federal policy measures, including the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](#), the [American Rescue Plan Act](#), and changes to [Medicaid guidance](#), provided pathways to expanding and improving access to school-based services. However, recent actions – such as cuts to the [Department of Education](#), the [freezing of \\$1 billion](#) allocated for school-based mental health services, and major reductions to [Medicaid](#) – may cause disruptions. Some school programs have already [reported](#) concerns with providing mental health .... These disruptions come at a time when approximately 1 in 5 teens are experiencing symptoms of [anxiety or depression](#) and many youth have reported bullying and exposure to violence, which can have adverse effects on their mental health. Additionally, a [2024 KFF survey](#) found differences in receipt of mental health care services by race and ethnicity, with a larger share of White parents compared to Black, Hispanic, and Asian parents reporting that their children received these services in the past three years.

Maryland needs to respond to these challenges in a proactive manner to help our students. This bill will require each public school to employ a full-time therapist that provides school-based mental health services to students during the instructional day; and requiring the full-time therapist to be licensed and certified by the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists.

Maryland can be a leader in this important service for all of our students.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0740.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/the-landscape-of-school-based-mental-health-services/>