



Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: Support for HB 0024 – County Boards of Education – Volunteer Aides – School Chaplain

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Association of Christian Lawmakers (NACL) and our nationwide membership of state legislators and public officials, we write in strong support of House Bill 0024, which authorizes county boards of education to permit trained school chaplains to serve as volunteer aides providing support services to students.

HB 0024 provides a narrowly tailored and responsible authorization for local school boards to use chaplains in the same manner as other volunteer aides, without supplanting educational personnel and under the supervision and guidelines established by each county superintendent.

Across the country, school chaplain programs have become an important component of student support services, particularly in addressing mental health needs, crisis intervention, grief counseling, family instability, bullying, and trauma. Properly trained and vetted chaplains serve as trusted adults who are available to listen, encourage, and assist students regardless of religious background. Participation by students is voluntary, services are supportive rather than instructional, and chaplains function as part of a broader team of counselors, administrators, and school professionals.

At a time when schools are facing unprecedented challenges related to student anxiety, depression, suicide risk, violence, and family disruption, HB 0024 offers Maryland school districts an additional, cost-effective tool to care for students' emotional and spiritual well-being while fully respecting constitutional boundaries and local control.

Importantly, HB 0024 does not mandate the use of chaplains, does not create a state-funded program, and does not authorize the replacement of licensed educators or

counselors. Instead, it simply allows local school boards the discretion to utilize trained volunteer chaplains as part of their existing volunteer aide framework.

The National Association of Christian Lawmakers commends Delegate Metzgar for introducing this thoughtful and balanced legislation. We respectfully urge the Committee to give HB 0024 a favorable report and allow Maryland schools the flexibility to offer this additional support to students and families.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the children and families of Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Rapert
Founder & President of NACL