

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 299
Human Services—Trauma-Informed Care—Commission and Training

Senate Finance Committee

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1:00 pm

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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 299, which would establish the Commission on Trauma-Informed Care within the Department of Human Services. We believe this commission would serve as a centralized nucleus for a systemic focus on the trauma our state's children and young people bring to our schools every day.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA believes that every Maryland child is a whole child—one that needs to feel healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged in order to eventually see success in college, career and life. In advocating for the needs of the whole child, MSEA members advocate to ensure that every public school in our state is a great public school—one that has updated technology; small, manageable classes; safe and modern school buildings; proper healthcare and nutrition; and highly qualified and highly effective educators. Given access to these resources, we know all of Maryland's students can achieve their full potential.

We have been staunch supporters of the effort to bring trauma-informed practices into our schools because we recognize the toll trauma takes on all members of the school community—students and adults alike. We know that failure to address this trauma leads to disrupted school environments for all. We have time and again experienced the adverse impact Adverse Childhood Experiences can have on the lives of our students, their families, and our communities. Given the current and future impacts we expect will result from the COVID-19 global pandemic, we believe very strongly that every step must be



taken to prepare our schools, our communities, and our state for what lies ahead; and that these efforts must commence with an appropriate sense of urgency. While we recognize that a great deal must be done, we know unequivocally that those efforts directly impacting our students must not be limited to confines of the schoolhouse. By bringing together all the state agencies that are directly or tangentially connected to our children and youth in order to address trauma is a significant step in the right direction. We applaud this effort and look forward to collaborating with this commission on efforts to deal with trauma in our schools and communities.

We urge a favorable report on SB 299.