

Written Testimony for Mental Health Bill by Delegate Marlon Amprey

Bill number: HB915- Workgroup on Black, Latino, and Other Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals

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Hi! My name is Tiara Bland and I am a school psychologist in Baltimore, MD. As the students of Baltimore City Public Schools are predominately African American, it is important for school psychologists to reflect the students, families, schools, and communities that they serve. Nationally, there is a critical shortage of school psychologists, but specifically a shortage of African American school psychologists. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (2018), 87% of school psychologists identified as Caucasian; 6% identified as Hispanic; 5% percent identified as African American; and approximately 3% identified as Asian. Additionally, 86% of school psychologists are monolingual English speakers and 62% of those living in the United States speak English and Spanish. Specifically, for Baltimore City Public Schools, I am one out of ten African American school psychologists in the district and many students and families do not get the opportunity to meet or work with an African American school psychologist at their schools. Baltimore City is need of more African American mental health professionals and I am in support of House Bill 915.