



Senator Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 8, 2022

Bill: Senate Bill 241 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - 9-8-8 Trust Fund

Position: Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic well-being of students and families across the state.

We support this bill because throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an increased number of students experiencing crisis. It is imperative that these students and their families have access to crisis services when they need them. Creating the 9-8-8 system is an important step toward ensuring that Marylanders have quick access to crisis services in the same way the 9-1-1 system connects Marylanders to emergency services. In order for 9-8-8 to be effective, we will need to continue to invest in our behavioral health crisis system. Creating the 9-8-8 trust fund is a necessary step towards ensuring funding for a comprehensive behavioral health crisis system.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 241. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net or (443) 350-1325.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association