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BILL NO.: **House Bill 573**

TITLE: School Wellness and Recess Grant Program – Establishment

SPONSOR: Delegate Belcastro

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 17, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 573 – School Wellness and Recess Grant Program – Establishment. This legislation would ensure that schools have written wellness policies and encourage students to participate in recess and physical activity.

Stay at home orders and social isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted the social and mental health of children and students across the State. As a former educator, Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski understands the urgent need for programs that protect the well-being of students beyond the classroom. By establishing strong and comprehensive wellness policies, schools have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Maryland’s children.

House Bill 573 addresses the urgent need to protect our children’s well-being by establishing the School Wellness and Recess Grant Program to ensure that schools and other youth programming have written wellness policies that aid in promoting the mental and physical health of students. These programs are sorely needed as a pandemic, which has dramatically impacted the mental health and social development of children across the State, subsides.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 573. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.