Maryland PTA is the state’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For nearly 104 years, our mission has been to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of HB 844, Public Schools – School Psychologists – Reports. This bill supports an effective plan of action to support the growing social and emotional needs of Maryland public school students through the increase of funding to support school psychologists.

School is the primary source of attention that children receive daily outside of their homes. The increasing need for teachers and principals to utilize class time and school time to address as well as assess the issues of psychology is not only taxing on the teachers and school administrators, but also on the other students in the class, who are also subjected to the time-out required from learning to address the students in need. All classroom stakeholders (students, teachers, assistants, substituents, parent visitors, etc.) are impacted from student behaviors that have arisen from external circumstances that prevent their ability to receive the benefits of teacher instruction.

House Bill 844 speaks to the need for reinforcement that the schools require to better support today’s child. It is imperative that our policy makers stay informed and create legislation that will help support the swift and dynamic shift in our school communities from the inside out. Supporting the psychological health of our students in school will positively reinforce their ability to excel in school and subsequently in the communities where they live so they can remain engaged and empowered through their education and the resources and support that come with it.

Maryland PTA supports House Bill 844 to provide for additional state and local funding to increase the allocation of additional school psychologists to be introduced into the school system with a strategy that requires ALL local school systems to provide an interim report that speaks to the ratios of school psychologists at one for every 750 students. Maryland PTA acknowledges the need for more psychologists in the school system and it is for this reason the Association requests a favorable report for HB 844.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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