



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 1231

Public Schools – Student Health Professional Retention Program – Established

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 8, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1231. This bill would establish a scaled promotional and pay policy for all student health professionals outside of school nurses and would mandate local governments to pay significant pay increases for those professionals.

Counties are proud to support public schools and agree with the general merit of the bill that Maryland's students deserve access to appropriate health professionals in our public schools. However, counties oppose the funding mandate set by HB 1231 after having just been held to the ambitious requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which included many short- and long-term funding requirements for local governments.

This landmark legislation embraced a whole-system concept of successful schools and priority-setting, establishing Maryland's priorities for educational reform. Notably, school staff pay and benefits were aspects of the Blueprint that the legislature already settled, as was the substantially enhanced funding deemed necessary for school nurses and school health programs. Compelling additional local spending for education—after having just approved significant funding requirements under Blueprint—would be unfair and unreasonable.

Counties are funding and supporting the Blueprint at the local level to ensure its successful implementation. Should HB 1231 become law, counties would be forced to redirect funding for public education at a time when taxpayer money should be directed to implementation of the Blueprint's many educational reforms. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 1231 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.