



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

BILL: House Bill 522
TITLE: Public Schools – School Resources Officers – Prohibited Conduct
DATE: February 3, 2021
POSITION: Support
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

This bill prohibits a school administrator or official or a school safety coordinator from directing a school resource officer (SRO) to enforce discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures. It also bars an SRO from unilaterally enforcing discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures, and requires that training provided to them reflect that prohibition.

PSSAM is supportive of House Bill 522 and believes that it is important to reiterate the appropriate roles and responsibilities of SROs in our local school systems. SROs provide important supportive safety services to school personnel and help to encourage a positive relationship with students and law enforcement. However, PSSAM is also aware of the periodic negative episodes and encounters between students and SROs in some schools across the State. These individual incidents further reinforce our support of this legislation and its policies and training to ensure a safe and supportive climate and school culture.

In 2018, the General Assembly passed the Safe to Learn Act and created a comprehensive curriculum for SROs and any other designated school security personnel. This legislation is aligned with the training program embedded in that legislation. Currently, SROs participate in a comprehensive 40-hour, 5-day, mandatory curriculum through the Maryland Center for School Safety.

PSSAM continues to be supportive of local decisions regarding the specific safety protocols in their schools. We recognize that some local systems may choose not to include SROs in their public safety plans, but instead provide adequate security personnel as required by the Safe to Learn Act. We believe this legislation will strengthen existing and proposed SRO programs. While not a provision of this bill, we also support adequate funding for all public-school safety programs, which should also include social, emotional, and behavioral supports in school systems.

For these reasons, PSSAM requests a favorable report on House Bill 522.

One Voice, One Vision for Maryland's Students

P. O. Box 12040, Baltimore, MD 21281; 410-935-7281; www.pssam.org; marypat.fannon@pssam.org