



House Bill 1530

Education - Student Health Screenings - Brain Injury

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Ways & Means Committee

Date: March 9, 2018

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1530. This bill would require local boards of education and local health departments to substantially expand student health screenings. Counties are concerned this legislation places a substantial administrative and cost burden onto local health departments. Without state resources to offset these potentially large costs, the bill represents an unfunded mandate on local governments.

Local health departments and local boards of education currently provide students with periodic vision and hearing screenings. HB 1530 requires an expansion of student health screenings that would require comprehensive neurological examinations in order to diagnose brain injuries.

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. This bill would result in substantial costs to local health departments, which are charged with hiring additional staff capable of diagnosing brain injuries. Local health departments indicate this legislation will result in significant cost increases. Furthermore, the process of providing notifications and educational materials to parents or guardians and preparing reports for the Maryland Department of Health will take a substantial amount of time, which could divert resources from other local health care efforts.

Under state law, counties have no choice but to fund these costs – competing for limited local funds against education, public safety, roadway maintenance, and other essential public services.

This bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy. Accordingly, without funds and possible technical assistance to suitably implement the bill's requirements, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1530.