The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 142. This Bill requires each school system to implement a program to provide awareness of the five signs of emotional suffering to students, parents and guardians, school personnel, and coaches and a program to provide all middle and high school student athletes and coaches with the tools to have a positive and character-building youth sports experience. To carry out these requirements a local school system may use materials available from the Campaign to Change Direction, the Positive Coaching Alliance, or any other appropriate entity, and collaborate with organizations with expertise in emotional health or transforming the culture of youth sports.

In Anne Arundel County Public Schools middle school emotional health is taught as one of four components of wellness with the emphasis on creating a balance between the four parts (social, emotional, mental, and physical). In our high school Health Education course we again discuss the warning signs of emotional and mental illness. Our curriculum also includes the importance of sportsmanship in middle school and high school physical education courses. This additional mandate is not necessary and it is in conflict with our need for local decision-making authority in developing curriculum to meet the needs of our students. This Bill would create additional costs related to training materials, time, and professional development.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue an UNFAVORABLE Report on House Bill 142.