The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 198. This Bill states that access may be denied (by designated staff) to individuals without bona fide business reasons for being on school property. A person who trespasses, refuses to leave after access is denied, or damages/defaces property is subject to a fine not exceeding $1,000 and imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months. At least one School Resource Officer (SRO) shall be assigned to every school. If a school does not have an SRO by August 1, 2015, the Superintendent shall hire a retired law enforcement officer to serve as the SRO. SROs shall receive salary of no less than $25/hour. School systems are entitled to reimbursement from the state and the reimbursement shall come from the Education Trust Fund (lottery/gaming).

Anne Arundel County Public Schools partners with Anne Arundel County Police Department to provide SRO services at identified schools. Mandating an SRO in every school does not take into account whether local jurisdictions have the capacity to hire, train, and deploy such personnel for every school. Requiring an SRO in every school is cost prohibitive, and finding qualified staff to serve in this capacity is problematic. Simply placing an SRO in every school does not necessarily make it safer especially if the individual is not qualified for that unique position. Regarding trespassers, we currently have an effective way to deal with individuals who attempt to trespass at schools. This Bill has large fiscal and operational implications that we oppose.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue an UNFAVORABLE Report on House Bill 198.