



House Bill 1204
An Act Concerning
County Boards and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools -
Discrimination - Prohibition
SUPPORT

Kimberly Mooney
GLSEN Maryland
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February 17, 2020

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senators,

On behalf of GLSEN MD, I write to you today in support of House Bill 1204; An Act Concerning County Boards and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools - Discrimination - Prohibition. This legislation would codify anti-discrimination protections for all students in grades pre-K to 12 attending public schools or schools that receive public funds.

We support this legislation because, currently, there is only “guidance” to suggest that schools not discriminate against our children. Without the weight of law behind it, this guidance can be and is ignored by many. Maryland is not providing a free, appropriate education to all if it is not accessible to some based on their marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identities. By requiring schools to spell out non-discrimination policies that honor all children, students and their parents/guardians will have firm legal grounds to stand up against inequitable treatment in schools. This is what all our children deserve.

According to GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey, many LGBTQ students in Maryland reported discriminatory policies or practices at their school. **Nearly 3 in 5 (57%) experienced at least one form of anti-LGBTQ discrimination at school** during the past year. Furthermore, **fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy** that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Fewer than 1 in 5 (17%) had a policy or official guidelines to support transgender or gender nonconforming (trans/ GNC) students.



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In the interest of equity and the wellbeing of the children of Maryland, we urge you to pass House Bill 1204.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimberly Mooney!" written over a horizontal line.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Mooney Board Chair, GLSEN MD
Contact: chair@md.glsen.org
443.509.1108