

House Bill 1204

An Act Concerning County Boards and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools -
Discrimination - Prohibition

SUPPORT

February 26, 2020

House Ways & Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Delegates,

I am seventeen years old and a junior in high school. I hope that you will support an extremely important bill this session that would protect the rights of students across Maryland. The Inclusive Schools Act would be a sweeping improvement in policy for Maryland's LGBTQ students and provide a remedy to stop discriminatory action. HB1204 has been introduced by Senator Cory McCray and Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins. The Inclusive Schools Act would codify anti-discrimination protections for all students, pre-k through 12 who are enrolled in our public schools and in any other schools receiving public funding. It also prohibits retaliation against a student or guardian who files a discrimination complaint, establishes a remedy process to resolve discriminatory action, and requires schools and schools Board to develop written policies for students and employees regarding civil rights protections. Ultimately, this legislation seeks to codify existing MSDE guidance and prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. I have experienced my fair share of discrimination and bullying because of my sexual orientation. I am gay and I have been called many horrific names such as the f slur, the d slur, and other uncreative remarks to demean my journey and struggle. I feel unsafe changing in public school gym locker rooms because I have been teased, called names, and made generally uncomfortable simply for being who I am. I felt so uncomfortable to be myself in elementary and middle school, but I have had a generally better time in high school due to the more supportive environment and the existence of my high school's Gender and Sexuality Alliance, also called the GSA. This bill would be so beneficial for myself and other students like me. The HB1204 bill would make Maryland schools better, safer, and more welcoming than ever before.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Alex Stevenson
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