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BILL NO.: **HB 1204**

TITLE: County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten
 Programs and Schools – Discrimination – Prohibition

SPONSOR: Delegate Wilkins

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 26, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1204 – County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools – Discrimination – Prohibition, which mandates that each local county board maintain an antidiscrimination policy and prohibits public and nonpublic prekindergarten programs that receive State funding from discriminating against an individual.

Every student has the right to get an education in an environment that does not make them feel ashamed to be who they are. Children in prekindergarten are particularly vulnerable to discrimination because they are at a critical stage in their mental development. Studies have shown that the racial disparities in American education begin earlier than expected – black and Latino children can face stigmatization before they are even fully toilet-trained.

The proposed antidiscrimination policy would ban discriminating against any individual based on their race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identify or disability. It also prohibits retaliatory action. This proposed legislation aligns with Baltimore County Public Schools’ commitment to closing achievement gaps and eliminating disparities for all students.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1204. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.