



Testimony for the House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2020

TONI HOLNESS
PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

HB 1292 Public Schools - Special Education Classrooms - Use of Video Recording Devices

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION OF
MARYLAND

UNFAVORABLE

MAIN OFFICE
& MAILING ADDRESS
3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD
SUITE 350
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
T/410-889-8555
or 240-274-5295
F/410-366-7838

The ACLU of Maryland respectfully urges an unfavorable report on HB 1292, which would require local boards of education to install video cameras in classrooms predominantly occupied by children with special needs, with certain provisions regarding storage and distribution of footage.

FIELD OFFICE
6930 CARROLL AVENUE
SUITE 610
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912
T/240-274-5295

The ACLU of Maryland supports the intent to protect students—and especially students with special needs—from abuses which may take place in the classroom. However, video surveillance of children is an improper remedy for addressing this important need. We would support alternative approaches, including investment in training and cultivating teachers, mental health professionals, and support staff who treat our children with respect.

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
JOHN HENDERSON
PRESIDENT

Although it may not be the bill's intent, historically, surveillance has disproportionately disadvantaged children of color and children with special needs, whose behaviors may be recorded and penalized at higher rates than their white counterparts.

Further, the video surveillance proposed in HB 1292 is problematic because parents and families of children with special needs are not given the opportunity to opt out of the proposed surveillance.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on HB 1292.