

February 28, 2022

To the Ways and Means Committee,

I am a homeschool graduate and a homeschool parent and I oppose HB0832. I have been very satisfied with the current laws of Maryland when it comes to homeschooling. It gives enough freedom to homeschoolers while also providing a system of checks and balances to ensure education is taking place through annual evaluations. I have read the text of the bill and it's vague and doesn't give a clear goal of what the purpose of the committee will be. Therefore, until I have more clarity on the actual function of the committee, I oppose it.

Outside of outlining *who* the committee will be made up of, the bill's text does not address what felt needs the committee will be addressing in the homeschool community and indeed, *why* it's needed? The text only states:

1. MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES EACH YEAR AT A TIME AND PLACE DESIGNATED BY THE CHAIR;
2. GATHER INFORMATION ON THE NEEDS OF HOMESCHOOL 4 PARENTS AND HOMESCHOOL UMBRELLA SCHOOLS IN THE STATE; AND
3. ADVISE THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT, THE STATE BOARD, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE GOVERNOR ON MATTERS RELATING TO HOMESCHOOLING.

This council is not a freestanding, autonomous homeschool council giving feed back to the Maryland State Department of Education, instead it is part of it MSDE and could indeed include members that are unfriendly to homeschooling. Homeschoolers already have direct access to our legislators, and I do not see a need for a "middleman." I think it will complicate something that doesn't need to be complicated.

If going ahead with the idea of a Homeschool Advisory Council within MSDE I think it should be reintroduced next session with genuine discussion within the homeschool community and feedback about what homeschoolers actually need and what the committee will and won't have the power to do and how it will function exactly within the laws that already exist for homeschooling.

Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion as a homeschooling constituent of the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Danielle Jones