

March 1, 2022

To the Delegates of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am a homeschooling parent in Montgomery County, Maryland, and I oppose passage of HB 832 in its current form.

There are a few main reasons I urge the delegates to oppose the bill.

First, the bill was sprung on Maryland homeschooling families without open and wide dissemination and with inadequate time for feedback and debate among the grassroots. We are a diverse and growing group and it is simply unfair to pass the bill without ample time to consider these varying viewpoints.

Second, the reason I, among many, have chosen to homeschool is to educate our children according to our family's priorities and principles, in line with Maryland law, and independent of those determined by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and local boards of education. This bill would undermine that independent aspect of homeschooling as the MSDE would look to the council to make potential future decisions. The council would be made up of MSDE representatives, political appointees, and homeschooling representatives vetted by the MSDE and political appointees. Our independent, grassroots homeschooling voices would be left out of advising the MSDE in future decisions. That is simply unacceptable.

If the intention is to create a framework for dialogue, communication, and regulatory concerns between the MSDE and homeschooling families or advocates there is a better way and a better bill. One terrific idea being touted is to set up town halls where those conversations can be had without cutting out the homeschooling base.

I am definitively opposed to having a group of predominantly unelected representatives make even advisory decisions regarding the educating of my children.

Please vote against HB 832.