



Family Heritage Matters

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HB0832, Position: FAVORABLE, WITH AMENDMENTS

HEARING: Ways & Means Committee

Honorable Chair Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Members of the Committee

Hello, my name is Gary Cox. I am the Director of Family Heritage Matters, an educational lobby for home education concerns since 1982. (All of my 10 children graduated from home school.)

I request that you vote on HB0832 *Favorable, with Amendments.*

Any good intentions of this bill will be lost because of its structure and process.

If passed as is, HB 832 by consequence (intended or not) would limit the representation of Maryland citizens on home schooling issues by creating a select advisory committee that by the merits of its appointed authority will have more influence on home instruction issues, laws and regulations than the input received from the citizens of the State.

Currently, the MSDE Student Services and School Counseling Section Chief, Lynne Muller, hosts two or more yearly informational meetings with the various county home school LEA's. These are hosted around the state to make them more accessible to all geographical areas. The department has invited registered homeschool umbrellas to participate at some of these meetings over the years. (I have spoken at these meetings more than 7 times since 1988.) It has been a delightful process that has helped discuss concerns, solve problems and mitigate tensions as they arise. Is it necessary to mandate what has been happening and improving on its own for the last 38 years? Practically, a simple directive to the MSDE encouraging this ongoing process is all that is needed to make it more accessible to all.

The Department does an incredible job reaching out to stakeholders. I understand that one of the bill's primary proponents felt left out when she wasn't initially invited to participate in amending of Ed. COMAR 10, in 2017. However, when she drew attention to that oversight, she was immediately included and has been invited to the table as a stakeholder ever since. *This bill, if passed without amendments, would actually impede this positive, supportive and ongoing interaction between MSDE and the homeschooling community.*

The real need for home school students is to have easy access to meaningful education options and information that will empower them to take control of their education with a view to meaningful employment opportunities and careers. These valid objectives will not be met without amending HB 0832. I have attached amendments below that will create a helpful information portal.

On Delegate Ruth's personal website for this bill, she comments that, "The intent was that the Council could conduct surveys" (e.g. "Do you think homeschoolers should be allowed to participate in school sports"?). She continues by stating that, "Although there are

*homeschooling organizations and individuals who have developed connections with the Department of Education and who advocate for the homeschooling community, **homeschoolers shouldn't have to rely on individuals being able to develop those kinds of relationships with MSDE.*** (Emphasis added.) Is it surveys or relationships?

Delegate Ruth's comment draws attention to what is the greatest need of home school students – and frankly, to *all* Maryland students: **Students should be able to access important and valuable information** to assist them in developing their educational plans and choices by accessing a comprehensive information portal located in an authoritative, trusted location, such as the MSDE website.

The following represents the amendments our organization is suggesting on the behalf of all home school students.

ALL TEXTUAL CHANGES FROM PAGE 2 OF THE BILL

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW. [Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law. STRIKE THROUGH INDICATES MATTER OF AMENDMENT DELETED FROM BILL. CAPITALS WITH UNDERLINE INDICATE MATTER ADDED AS AMENDMENT TO BILL.

ON PAGE 1, LINE

2 EDUCATION - MARYLAND HOMESCHOOL STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL PORTAL - ESTABLISHMENT

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Homeschool STUDENT Advisory ~~Council~~ Portal in the State

4 Department of Education to gather PROVIDE information on FOR the needs of homeschool STUDENTS, parents

5 and homeschool umbrella schools and advise the State Superintendent of Schools,

6 the State Board of Education, the General Assembly, and the Governor on matters

7 relating to homeschooling EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES and generally relating to the Maryland Homeschool STUDENT,

8 Advisory Council AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF REQUIRING THE STATE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH CERTAIN AGENCIES, TO ANNUALLY COLLECT CERTAIN INFORMATION ON THE MILITARY AND JOBS, HIGH SCHOOLS, PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS, AND CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE AND TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A CERTAIN STUDENT HOMESCHOOL PORTAL ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE THAT CONTAINS THE INFORMATION COLLECTED; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT TO PUBLISH, AND EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM TO DISTRIBUTE, THE STUDENT HOME SCHOOL PORTAL ON OR BEFORE CERTAIN DATES EACH YEAR; AUTHORIZING CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS AND SCHOOLS TO ENTER INTO CERTAIN AGREEMENTS TO UTILIZE DATA FROM EXISTING REPORTS AND PORTALS; AND GENERALLY RELATING TO THE HOMESCHOOL STUDENT PORTAL.

20 IN THIS TITLE, "COUNCIL" "PORTAL" MEANS THE MARYLAND

21 HOMESCHOOL STUDENT ADVISORY "COUNCIL" "PORTAL".

INSERT THE FOLLOWING IN PLACE OF THE SECTION STRICKEN...

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

1 (2) "INSTITUTION OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION" HAS THE
2 MEANING STATED IN § 10-101 OF THIS ARTICLE.

3 (3) "PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOL" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 4
10-101 OF THIS ARTICLE. 5

(4) "PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION" HAS THE
6 MEANING STATED IN § 10-101 OF THIS ARTICLE.

7 (B) THE DEPARTMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MARYLAND
HIGHER
8 EDUCATION COMMISSION, THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, AND
THE
9 MARYLAND LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM CENTER, SHALL:

10 (1) ANNUALLY COLLECT INFORMATION ON:

11 (I) THE MOST IN-DEMAND JOBS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING
THE

12 STARTING SALARY AND EDUCATION LEVELS REQUIRED FOR EACH JOB;

13 (II) FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS OF POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION

14 AND PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS IN THE STATE, THE AVERAGE:

15 1. COST OF ATTENDANCE;

16 2. MONTHLY STUDENT LOAN PAYMENTS OF STUDENTS

17 WHO ATTENDED EACH INSTITUTION OR PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOL;

18 3. STUDENT 3-YEAR LOAN DEFAULT RATE;

19 4. GRADUATION OR COMPLETION RATE OF STUDENTS

20 WHO ATTENDED EACH INSTITUTION OR PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOL; AND

21 5. STARTING SALARY OF GRADUATES OR COMPLETERS

22 OF EACH INSTITUTION OR PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOL;

23 (III) FOR ALL PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION

24 INSTITUTIONS, THE AVERAGE TOTAL STUDENT LOAN DEBT OF GRADUATES
OF EACH

25 INSTITUTION FOR EACH UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEGREE
PROGRAM AT

26 THE INSTITUTION;

27 (IV) THE COMPLETION RATE AND AVERAGE STARTING
SALARY

28 OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WHILE IN HIGH
SCHOOL:

29 (C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

30 (1) ANNOUNCE COMAR REGULATION CHANGES IN THE
HOMESCHOOL PORTAL FOUR WEEKS BEFORE FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF ANY

CHANGES TO ANY COMAR REGULATION THAT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECTS HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS.

34 (2) POST THE PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR CHANGES TO ANY COMAR REGULATION THAT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECT HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE DAY IT IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT SUCH CHANGES TO THE MARYLAND REGISTRY.

CONTINUING FROM PAGE 2, HOUSE BILL 832

1 (A) THERE IS A MARYLAND HOMESCHOOL STUDENT ADVISORY “~~COUNCIL~~”
2 “**PORTAL**”. ~~IN~~ MAINTAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

3 (B) (1) THE “~~COUNCIL~~” “**PORTAL**” CONSISTS **SHALL** CONTAIN INFORMATION
4 ~~FROM OF~~ THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS SOURCES:

5 (I) ~~THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT, OR THE STATE-~~
6 ~~SUPERINTENDENT’S DESIGNEE; ALL MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES.~~

7 (II) ~~THE SECRETARY OF THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION-~~
8 ~~COMMISSION, OR THE SECRETARY’S DESIGNEE; ALL MARYLAND COLLEGES~~
9 ~~AND UNIVERSITIES.~~

10 (III) ~~TWO INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED AS HOMESCHOOL LIAISONS-~~
11 ~~THROUGH A LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY, APPOINTED BY THE STATE-~~
12 ~~SUPERINTENDENT OR THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT’S DESIGNEE; ALL~~
13 ~~REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN MARYLAND.~~

14 (IV) ~~THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER-~~
15 ~~OF THE HOUSE: THE MILITARY, ALL PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS, PUBLIC~~
16 ~~SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OR OTHER ANY OTHER~~
17 ~~REGISTERED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION IN MARYLAND.~~

18 1. ~~ONE INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED BY A HOMESCHOOL-~~
19 ~~UMBRELLA SCHOOL REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S DIVISION OF-~~
20 ~~EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM APPROVAL; AND (V) ALL~~
21 ~~REGISTERED HOMESCHOOL UMBRELLA SCHOOLS.~~

22 2. ~~ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A VETERAN HOMESCHOOL-~~
23 ~~PARENT WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY EDUCATED AT LEAST ONE CHILD TO THE-~~
24 ~~COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL; (VI) ALL NONPUBLIC PRIMARY AND~~
25 ~~SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS REGISTERED AND OPERATED BY A~~
26 ~~BONA FIDE CHURCH ORGANIZATION.~~

27 (V) ~~THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT-~~
28 ~~OF THE SENATE: (VII) ALL NONPUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY~~
29 ~~EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HOLDING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL.~~

30 1. ~~ONE MEMBER EMPLOYED BY A HOMESCHOOL-~~
31 ~~UMBRELLA SCHOOL THAT IS REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S DIVISION~~
32 ~~OF~~

~~23 EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM APPROVAL; AND (VIII) ALL~~
RECOGNIZED ONLINE NONPUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS.

~~24 2. ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A VETERAN HOMESCHOOL-~~
~~25 PARENT WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY EDUCATED AT LEAST ONE CHILD TO THE~~
~~26 COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL; AND (VIII) ALL MARYLAND CHARTER~~
SCHOOLS.

~~27 (VI) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE~~
~~28 FOLLOWING MEMBERS, SELECTED BY THE COUNCIL: (IX) ALL~~
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS;

~~29 1. ONE INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF~~
~~30 GIFTED CHILDREN WHO HAS DIRECT EXPERIENCE HOMESCHOOLING AT LEAST~~
~~ONE~~
~~31 OF THEIR OWN GIFTED CHILDREN; (X) ALL CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS; AND~~

~~ON PAGE 3,~~

~~1 2. ONE INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF~~
~~2 SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS WHO HAS DIRECT EXPERIENCE~~
HOMESCHOOLING (XI) ALL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

~~3 AT LEAST ONE OF THEIR OWN SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN;-~~

~~4 3. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM BALTIMORE CITY, 5 BALTIMORE COUNTY~~
~~OR HARFORD COUNTY;-~~

~~6 4. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM CARROLL COUNTY,-~~

~~7 FREDERICK COUNTY, WASHINGTON COUNTY, ALLEGANY COUNTY, OR GARRETT~~
~~8 COUNTY;-~~

~~9 5. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM HOWARD COUNTY OR~~
~~10 MONTGOMERY COUNTY;-~~

~~11 6. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,-~~
~~12 CHARLES COUNTY, OR ST. MARY'S COUNTY;-~~

~~13 7. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY OR~~
~~14 CALVERT COUNTY; AND-~~

~~15 8. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM CECIL COUNTY, KENT~~

~~16 COUNTY, QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY, CAROLINE COUNTY, TALBOT COUNTY,-~~
~~17 DORCHESTER COUNTY, WICOMICO COUNTY, SOMERSET COUNTY, OR~~
~~WORCESTER-~~

~~18 COUNTY.-~~

~~19 (2) THE MEMBERS SELECTED BY THE COUNCIL UNDER PARAGRAPH~~

~~20 (1)(VI) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL:-~~

~~21 (I) 1. FOR THE FIRST TERM THAT THE COUNCIL IS-~~

~~22 OPERATING, BE SELECTED BY THE COUNCIL MEMBERS SPECIFIED UNDER~~
~~23 PARAGRAPH (1)(I) THROUGH (V) OF THIS SUBSECTION; AND-~~

~~24 2. FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT TERM THAT THE COUNCIL IS-~~

25 OPERATING, BE SELECTED BY THE FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL; AND
26 (II) BE PARENTS WHO HAVE LEGALLY HOMESCHOOLED A CHILD
27 FOR AT LEAST 4 YEARS.
28 (3) EACH MEMBER SHALL: 29 (I) BE A RESIDENT OF THE STATE;

PAGE 4

1 (II) BE AN INDIVIDUAL OF ABILITY AND INTEGRITY WHO IS
2 EXPERIENCED IN HOMESCHOOLING;

3 (III) REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY OF HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES
4 THAT EXIST THROUGHOUT THE STATE, INCLUDING DIVERSITY OF
HOMESCHOOL
5 PHILOSOPHY, AGE, RELIGION, RACE, ETHNICITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND
6 GENDER IDENTITY; AND

7 (IV) REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE CITIZENS OF THE
8 STATE IN PROMOTING HOMESCHOOLING AS A TRUSTED, PARENT DIRECTED,
9 QUALITY SCHOOL CHOICE.

10 (C) (1) (I) THE TERM OF A MEMBER IS 3 YEARS.

11 (II) A MEMBER MAY NOT SERVE MORE THAN TWO
CONSECUTIVE 12 TERMS.

13 (2) AT THE END OF A TERM, A MEMBER CONTINUES TO SERVE UNTIL
14 A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED OR SELECTED AND QUALIFIES.

15 (3) A MEMBER WHO IS APPOINTED AFTER A TERM HAS BEGUN
SERVES 16 ONLY FOR THE REST OF THE TERM AND UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS
APPOINTED OR

17 SELECTED AND QUALIFIES.

18 (D) A MEMBER:

19 (1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE 20
COUNCIL; BUT

21 (2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE
22 STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE
BUDGET.

23 9.11-103.

24 (A) EACH YEAR, THE COUNCIL SHALL ELECT A CHAIR AND VICE
CHAIR 25 FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.

26 (B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE STAFF FOR THE COUNCIL.

27 9.11-104.

28 THE COUNCIL MARYLAND HOMESCHOOL STUDENT ADVISORY PORTAL SHALL:

From PAGE 5

1 (1) **MEET BE UPDATED AND POSTED** AT LEAST FOUR ONE TIMES
EACH YEAR AT A TIME AND PLACE 2 DESIGNATED BY THE CHAIR BY **OCTOBER**

31;

**3 (2) GATHER ~~AND POST~~ THE REQUIRED INFORMATION ~~ON FOR~~
THE NEEDS OF HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS, HOMESCHOOL**

4 PARENTS AND HOMESCHOOL UMBRELLA SCHOOLS IN THE STATE; AND

**5 (3) ADVISE REPORT TO THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OR THE
DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE, ~~THE STATE BOARD, THE~~
6 ~~GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE GOVERNOR ON MATTERS RELATING TO~~
7 ~~HOMESCHOOLING EACH~~ UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE PORTAL UPDATE.**

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 9 1,
2022.