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## My opinion on House Bill 832

Greetings, honorable delegates. If you are reading/hearing this, I am honored that you are taking the time to read the words of a mere highschool senior. I have been a homeschool student since 1st grade, and I have attended 2 different tutorials that cooperated with my parents to advance my education. I would like to thank delegate Sheila Ruth for her concern, but I propose that it is unnecessary at this time. Homeschooling in Maryland is not merely scraping by without governmental assistance; in fact, it is thriving.

I realize that the State of Maryland has many demands on it's time and resources. Thus, I assume that you, as part of the governing body of our state, do as well. Homeschooling in this state does not require government intervention in order to produce talented students who are fully ready for the rest of life -just look at our standardized test scores if you need proof! I propose that instead of attempting to create a council to watch over a group that doesn't want a council, we should all focus our energy and time into solving more pressing issues, like climate change or abortion.

Additionally, I object to the structure of the proposed council. Delegate Ruth wants it to be composed of 3 political representatives, 3 government officials, and 6 homeschool representatives. However, the bill also states that the homeschool representatives are to be chosen by the council. How can politicians and government representatives, who most likely will

have little to no actual experience with homeschooling, fairly represent us, or justly choose the other 6 members of the council?

Lastly, I assert that education outside of primary public schooling is outside the province of the government to control or interfere with, unless it is somehow a threat to the State. Obviously, we are not. The function of government here, and ideally everywhere, is to provide an option for free education for all. If homeschoolers choose not to take advantage of this option, but are still paying their taxes and turning out good results, then it is not the government's place to interfere unless requested to. After all, is not the restriction of liberty ultimately a necessary evil?

In conclusion, I ask you, honorable delegates, to vote this bill down, for the sake of your fellow taxpaying Americans, the homeschool community. But don't do it just for us. Not long after our country was founded, one of the greatest men in our history spoke of the "sacred fire of liberty", and charged us with the duty to keep it burning. Is it not our duty, then, to prevent that fire from being dimmed, when there is no reason to do so? Thank you for having the patience to sit through a mere 19 year old's carry on, and I wish you all a blessed day, no matter which way you vote.