

AGAINST HB0832 AS ARTICULATED

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(About me: I work full-time, but also actively participate in the homeschooling of my daughter, whose primary home teacher is my husband David Marcum. This statement is from both of us.)

Although excellent in intent, HB032 is flawed in its concept and its articulation for several reasons:

- 1) The bill stipulates that the homeschool representatives will be appointed by the State Superintendent and the Speaker of the House for the first year. After that, the selected representatives will appoint others. This would make it far too easy for the proposed Advisory Council to become a self-selecting group of people. However, over time, they will grow to be seen as the voice of all homeschoolers.
- 2) The homeschool representatives are not elected, and, therefore, not fully representative of the homeschool community. In fact, if a representative is perceived as working against the interests of homeschoolers, there would be no recourse for the community to remove that representative.
- 3) The bill as written will not prevent a single organization or even a private company from ensconcing itself in the Council and purporting to represent all homeschoolers for years to come.
- 4) The proposed makeup of the Council is already an example of lopsided representation: two of its appointees are designated to represent “gifted and talented children” and “special needs children.” The rest of the hugely diverse homeschooling body apparently will not obtain designated seats on the Council. Moreover, Maryland counties seem randomly grouped for representation. An individual from Calvert County is not likely to be aware of the particular needs of homeschoolers from Anne Arundel County and vice versa.
- 5) The Advisory Council is not accountable to any homeschool organizations or the community as a whole.
- 6) There has been no discussion in the community about the need for an advisory council prior to this bill. We are surprised that the numerous homeschool organizations and grassroots co-ops have not been consulted.

In short, although well intended, the proposed Council will not be representative of or accountable to the hugely diverse body of homeschoolers.