

## Statement of Opposition to House Bill 832

My name is Madison Smith. I was homeschooled from Kindergarten through high school, and I am now a teacher at a homeschool co-op. In early February, I contacted Delegate Ruth directly to urge her to withdraw the bill. I received what I assume to have been a canned response. When I followed up with a few questions about the statements made in her email response, I never heard back.

I oppose House Bill 832 because homeschoolers do not need a bureaucracy to take the place of grassroots organizations and individuals as the voice of homeschooling in Maryland. This committee would restrict the many voices of homeschoolers to a select few. As a result, the decisions which the government makes based on the committee's counsel will be narrowed to the scope of only a few people's opinions. It will also give the government the opportunity to say to homeschoolers who raise concerns outside of the committee, "there is a committee for you; talk to them." Suppose the committee does not agree that the concern is important - individuals and grassroots organizations may not be addressed if the committee is unconvinced of the merits of their proposition.

Additionally, the possible benefits of such a committee could be realized without forming this committee. For example, I have long believed that it is unfair to bar tax-paying families from enrolling their students in sports and music lessons at the public school. Rules could be changed to allow this without forming a committee.

Finally, there is no guarantee that this committee will not become an arm of government control over homeschoolers. Perhaps authority will be delegated to this committee to make rules for homeschoolers, or it may propose regulations to the

governor. The last thing homeschoolers need or want is more regulation. Even if the committee is not intended to fulfill this purpose, it is not unrealistic to believe that it might eventually be given more power and become a thorn in the side of homeschooling families in Maryland.

I urge the members of the Maryland State House to leave homeschoolers to continue achieving excellence. We have taken care of ourselves this long, and we will continue to be more than competent without government assistance.