

RE: HB0832 - House Bill 832: Establishment of a Maryland Homeschool Advisory Council

Dear Ways and Means Committee,

I am **opposed** to **HB0832**.

A Maryland State Department of Education Homeschool Advisory Council is not necessary.

Families who participate in home education already do so directly through the Board of Education in their respective counties, or through an approved 'umbrella program.'

While the bill may be well-intentioned, it is ill-conceived in that no single council could possibly represent the diverse needs, approaches, curricula, and pedagogies of the varied home educators in Maryland.

There is no need to create a state law addressing this issue, when families are already able to communicate vis-à-vis with their local BOE and with its homeschool representatives, or through their umbrella program coordinators.

Home-educating families already communicate with their local BOA and with MSDE and can participate in any sessions or meetings open to the public. Both of my children were home-educated from preschool-age and enrolled in our county's Early College Access Program until they began college full time, and we were always kept abreast of MSDE and BOA matters, not only by our umbrella programs, but also by the different co-ops and STEM programs they attended.

If MSDE wants to be more open and transparent about issues concerning home educators, they need only offer well-publicized, open meetings for umbrella program coordinators and members, and home-educating parents and families not otherwise associated with umbrella programs.

A 'select' council mandated by state law is unnecessary and poses greater risk than it does benefit to the home educating families whom it would affect. I am opposed to HB0832.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Teresa L. Voshell
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01 March 2022