

HB 832: Homeschool Advisory Council Ways & Means Committee Hearing: Thursday, March 3, 2022

FAVORABLE Testimony FOR HB 832 provided by:

Miriam Snare
Homeschooling Parent

Honorable Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I have been homeschooling in Maryland for the last 7 years and am planning to continue doing so until my younger child graduates in 10 years. I am asking for a FAVORABLE report on HB 832.

Several other advisory councils exist within the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) to inform policy-making for specific subgroups of students. These councils represent the interests of early childhood and special education students, among others. HB 832 seeks to establish a similar council to give homeschooling families a seat at the table when regulations affecting us are created.

Currently, when considering changes to the existing regulations, the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) only invites a small group of select individuals as “interested parties.” This group has not included any parents who are actively homeschooling, nor has it included people of color or non-Christians.

Maryland’s homeschooling families represent a wide spectrum of cultures, religious affiliations, and homeschooling approaches. Yet the loudest voice that purports to speak for all of us is a conservative Christian legal team from Virginia, Home School Legal Defense (HSLDA). HSLDA gets invited to MSDE’s interested parties meeting on homeschooling; however, they do not represent non-Christian homeschoolers like myself.

The diversity in the membership of the Homeschool Advisory Council spelled out in the bill is of great importance to me. Therefore, I urge you to give HB 832 a FAVORABLE vote at your next committee meeting.

Sincerely,
Miriam Snare
Nottingham, MD