

Why I oppose HB832

By Kim Engelke, Director of Peach Tree Homeschool Academy, homeschool mom, and advocate.

Delegate Ruth you have disappointed all your homeschooling constituents with your blind support of HB832. You have allowed yourself to be manipulated by a member of our homeschool community who has long sought to control the narrative of homeschool legislation in MD. I am very disappointed that you lack the competency to see the obvious harm of this bill and that you truly believe that this bill was written on behalf of the majority of homeschool families in MD.

Why didn't you, Del. Ruth, question a bill that was written in secret? An idea that was never brought to the attention of the grassroots homeschool community. A bill that is so unpopular it needs to be rushed through a vote, with limited time for deliberation and conversation from the very community it affects?

Del. Ruth, you were a part of our homeschool community for many years. What made you think that homeschooling families wanted an advisory council that included members of MDSE? In which members of MDSE would have power over decision making for homeschooling families? Increased bureaucracy and control over legislative decisions for homeschoolers is never in our favor.

Del. Ruth, the advisory council you are proposing has no accountability to the homeschool community whatsoever. It is entirely answerable only to itself. Members are appointed, not voted on! How is a council that is not held accountable to the greater homeschool community representative of that community? Why would you ever agree to support such a bill?

Del. Ruth, the advisory council you are proposing is not required to be transparent or accessible to the homeschool community. The bill makes no requirement that the council make itself or its work accessible/transparent to the community it supposedly represents. How could you miss this very

important fact? Why would grassroots homeschool families ever support a council that cuts them out of the process? It makes no sense.

Del. Ruth, the bill does not include any language that forces MDSE to engage with council members in good faith with full transparency. It does not force MDSE to share accurate and timely information with the council or include council members in their decision making.

This bill will, with out any doubt, weaken our grassroots power and will lead to seriously damaging decisions with no grassroots recourse. An advisory council is unnecessary. Homeschool legislation in MD is some of the most favorable in the country. All accomplished with grassroots efforts over the past 40 plus years.

I voted for you, however, your blind support of a bill so damaging to the homeschool community, a community you have benefited from and been a part of, will keep me from voting for you in the future. I no longer have faith in your ability to lead in a competent, thoughtful way.