

SUPPORT

HB618-MD Parental Rights Act

Jacquelin Zubko-Cunha, Gaithersburg, MD

I am writing to urge you to support HB618 MD Parenting Rights Act. As a parent of two young children, it is important for me to know that my husband and I serve as the primary conductors of their education, and moral and religious growth and that the school system is a partner (of which we designate).

It is quite shocking to realize that we don't already have the some of the protections and rights as parents and families that this act would allow. As a parent, I want to be involved in my children's education and that includes being allowed the transparency of knowing what is available to them, in the same way, I know what they have access to in our home. Requiring our county board to submit a curriculum summary prior to the start of the school year will reinforce the parent/school partnership and help to improve trust in the public education system. Should concerns arise throughout the school year, we should be allotted time to testify to the state board of education and county school board meetings. An open discourse is imperative to strong collaboration.

Apart from academia, I have been quite concerned hearing about other states allowing minors to make medical decisions without parental consent. When it comes to our two children, my husband and I know every allergy, health condition, and family medical history...essential information in making informed medical decisions. Children must not be treated as adults, until they are adults. We, as parents, bear the responsibility until they are 18, to make decisions in their best interest and as we see fit. Therefore, it is imperative that (unless otherwise authorized by law) a health care provider must obtain parental/guardian consent before providing, soliciting, or arranging to provide health care services or prescribe drugs to a minor.

Finally, one would hope that great care would be taken before terminating parental rights. As a mandated reporter myself, I do not take this lightly. The opportunity to be tried before a jury before terminating parental rights is a check and balance that makes sense to ensure the best outcome for a child and family.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Jacquelin Zubko-Cunha