

March 1, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Angela Stoltzfus and I have been a resident of Maryland since 2019. I am a professionally licensed educator who has taught in public, private and homeschool settings for over 20 years in 5 different states. In my experience, Maryland already is a leader in accountability and oversight of the Homeschool Education community through the detailed COMAR regulations and the local school entities and umbrella review processes.

The homeschooling community includes a broad coalition of parents and organizations united in purpose to preserve the liberty to homeschool and provide individualized instruction to their own children. I do not believe an advisory council is necessary to maintain this liberty. While well-intended, this bill would create a quasi-official source for information on homeschooling, which would, in turn, minimize the effectiveness of grassroots homeschool groups and individual advocates. It would harm the diversity and plurality of views, approaches and philosophies that have historically been a strength of the hundreds of homeschool support organizations, co-ops, umbrellas, and tutorials in Maryland.

Homeschooling has thrived for decades without government assistance. Given that there is no tuition tax credit for parents investing and sacrificing to educate their children, there is no authority for more government interference or oversight than what COMAR regulations already provide.

The consequence for such an approach is already evident in Hampshire's example as it is the only state in the United States with a homeschool advisory council. The realities of the implementation of more oversight and interference curtails the freedoms that families like mine have enjoyed in Maryland.

In summary, I oppose House Bill 832 Because:

1. It would minimize the voices of grassroots homeschool advocates and organizations by creating a bureaucratic entity to be the designated voice on homeschool policy.
2. It follows a model in New Hampshire that I believe does not fit the Maryland historic approach to educational freedom.
3. It is unnecessary because homeschoolers are not asking for government-funded services.

Sincerely,

Angela R. Stoltzfus

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