

To Whom It May Concern:

As children are each unique with unique needs, and homeschool parents are choosing this option above a more standardized learning to meet specific, unique needs, this act seems to be entirely in opposition to the purpose of homeschooling. The homeschooling community includes a broad and diverse 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. 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 families have 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 absolutely 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 and have a right to have in Maryland. As a homeschool tutor of other homeschool families, it also curtails the freedom to do my job effectively, which happened so much when I was a public-school teacher it is precisely why I left and started working in homeschool tutorials.

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.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Colleen Pescatrice