

## Opposition to HB119/SB199

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To: Michelle Opiela <mdo117@hotmail.com>

Dear Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members:

I understand that HB119 has been amended such that it would result in a total state takeover of local control over all curriculum frameworks, standards, and instructional materials. This is a downright anti-American approach to governance. Federalism ensures that counties have a certain amount of autonomy to run themselves as they see fit. Please hold this bill in committee and work toward a resolution to allow local boards of education to exercise flexibility to alter state curriculum guidelines to meet the needs and values of their school districts.

Additionally, giving the State Superintendent of Schools total authority to enforce local compliance by withholding massive amounts of state funding should a county school system not be in complete accordance with "every element of the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction" established by the State Board of Education fosters abuse of power and renders county school systems subject to the possibly capricious decisions of one person.

Apart from the aforementioned concerns, this bill presents moral concerns. It is common sense that it is a parent's right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their child. Moreover, it is a parent's duty to raise their child as they see fit. Decent people should be able to agree that under the umbrella of acceptable parenting people have different religious and philosophical worldviews and are entitled to impart such views on their children. Neglectful and/or abusive parents are a different matter entirely, of course.

Legislators and their constituents must resist the urge to give into authoritarian impulses and proudly mandate that their worldviews reign when it comes to educating other people's children. It is because of the aforementioned varying worldviews that public schools are supposed to teach just academic disciplines and not teach morality beyond the basic moral lessons needed to manage the classroom such as being kind, not lying, and not cheating.

Religious values have stood the test of time, and many people of varying faiths who subscribe to such values as well as many who are nonreligious but who subscribe to traditional values have valid reason to be highly concerned with this legislation. As you know, it mandates teaching gender identity to kids as young as Pre-K, sexual orientation to fourth graders, and different types of sexual acts to seventh graders. Parents have the right to impart their own moral views on gender identity, sexual orientation, and different types of sexual acts to their children; public schools do not have this right.

Finally, it is very confusing to teach children as young as Pre-K about a concept as nonsensical as gender identity when they are just starting to figure out what gender means. Gender is biologically based; not defined by how a person identifies. It is impossible to feel that you are the opposite gender because it is impossible to experience that which you are not. The very small percentage of people who legitimately have gender dysphoria think they were born in the wrong body, but that doesn't mean they feel as though they are the opposite sex from what they are. They can merely assume what it must feel like to be the opposite sex based on an observed and imagined experience of it.

Please uphold common sense and morality by opposing HB119/SB199.

Thank you,  
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