

Subject: Unfavorable comments regarding House Bill 119

The synopsis of House Bill 119 (HB 119) titled “County Boards of Education - Curriculum Guides and Courses of Study – Requirements” is:

Requiring each county board of education to follow the policy and guidelines for program instruction for public schools established by the State Board of Education; requiring the Superintendent to notify a county board if it is determined that the county board is not following every element of the policy and guidelines; authorizing the Superintendent to withhold 10% of the funds budgeted for the county board if the board fails to resolve any discrepancy identified by the Superintendent within 30 days; etc.

***PLEASE NOTE the amended changes in the synopsis above:*** local school boards may not determine their own curricula, which would instead be dictated by the state superintendent. The state superintendent may withhold 20% of any county's funding if the curricula are determined to be non-compliant in any way. Parents may not opt out of any required material.

We fully and strongly oppose HB 119 for the following reasons:

- Transparency of the curricula given to the children of Maryland parents in public schools and the parents' right to know is an inherent part of their Constitutional right<sup>1</sup>. The United States Supreme Court declared in 1972 “The history and culture of Western civilization reflect a strong tradition of parental concern for the nurture and upbringing of their children. This primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition.” *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972), at 232.
- Parents have the fundamental right to know how and what their children are being taught in public schools and must be informed of any curricula that does not comport with their core beliefs with the option of opting out of such curricula prior to it being given in public schools. In addition, parents as tax-paying citizens have the right to observe and participate in determining the content and implementation of public school programs and curricula. Parents have the fundamental right to insist that content of public school curricula is factually sound and that the inclusion of new content based on new ideology and/or methodology is evidence-based and demonstrably leads to positive outcomes.
- HB119 seeks to remove control not only from parents but also from local school districts and boards of education.
- Inclusion of gender ideology in public school curricula based on recent changes in public guidelines is linked to negative mental and physiological health outcomes for students. HB119 includes open-ended language which does not adequately safeguard parents' vital and fundamental right to protect their children from exposure to curricula including content on ideology that is not evidence-based and demonstrably causes negative outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> From the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

For the reasons stated above, we strongly oppose HB 119. Please do not let this bill go forward.

Thank you for considering our comments.

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