

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Bill: SB199 - Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework - Established

Position: **Oppose**

Dear Senator Feldman and fellow members of the Committee,

As a parent of three school-aged children in preschool, Kindergarten and 2nd grade, I staunchly oppose SB199. I sat in the House Ways and Means Committee hearing last week and was disappointed at the claims made by supporters of cross-filed HB119 that the framework is necessary for the health of children across the state of Maryland. The testimony during the House hearing made it very clear that extensive sex education - including the topics of consent, sexting, gender identity, sexual orientation, and more - is already contained within the published health framework to be used by teachers, but the purpose of this bill is to MANDATE the framework across all PreK-12 public schools in Maryland. Currently, locally elected school boards and parents have input on the implementation of the health framework which directly impacts their children. This bill removes the rights of parents to give input on what is being taught to their children by eliminating these local feedback opportunities. In fact, a representative of the Maryland Academy of Pediatrics testified in the House committee recommending the OPT-OUT for parents to be removed! Her argument was that kids are engaging in these sexual behaviors and for the sake of their health this framework must be mandated and parents should not be allowed the right to remove their children from the classroom. Are we paying attention to what is happening here? Comprehensive Sex Education has now reached the shores of Maryland. CSE is a “rights-based” approach to sex education and promotes sexual rights to children at the **expense** of their sexual health. The comprehensive sex education proponents at the collegiate, secondary and even primary level may purport to aim at sexual risk reduction, but it effectively instructs young people in sexual **risk-taking**.

This is not a sexual health framework; instead, it is promoting sexual freedom for children. This framework endorses early sexual activity and multiple partners as well as sexual experimentation, which are the very behaviors that fuel the epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unplanned pregnancies, and emotional distress. Those who practice the lifestyles endorsed by this framework have more doctors’ appointments, not less!

Case in point, the framework in Maryland schools that this bill seeks to MANDATE includes on page 34 for 7th graders to “identify oral, vaginal, anal, and solo sex and the possible outcomes of each”. The framework also requires students as young as PreK-2nd grade to be taught about multiple genders beyond a binary view of male and female found on pages 28-29 so that the students can first recognize, then identify and finally demonstrate “a range of ways people identify and express their gender”.

Not all parents want their children to be taught these concepts at such young ages. Rather within the home, these sensitive topics can be addressed and the opt-out feature must remain intact! Nothing less than the innocence of children is at stake.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Ullmann of District 7A in Kingsville, Maryland.