

## SB199/HB119 Opposition

There are two main objections in allowing this bill to pass:

1. Biased, partisan ideology has no place in our schools, and;
2. This bill takes away local control when it comes to the curriculum decision making process.

First, there is a reason why the Christian flag cannot be displayed in public schools - Separation of Church and State. We may have the right to freedom of religion under the First Amendment of our Constitution, but we may not solely focus on just one type of religion so as to enable everyone of various religious backgrounds their freedom to worship. Christians have understood for many years now, that their religious beliefs cannot be displayed, nor can prayer occur in their public schools. If Christian families have the resources to send their kids to private, Christian school, they can freely practice their faith at these institutions. For the many other families who do not have the resources to send their kids to private school or homeschool, they are confined to an institution where they must remain silent regarding their faith. So it begs the question as to why a certain group of kids and their families must remain silent when it comes to a very important part of their lives - their faith - while another group may freely practice their belief of a political, ideological lifestyle choice inside public schools? Another example of the division occurring in public schools that we have been witnessing, is how there have been some students who have worn American flag apparel, or politically conservative themed apparel, and were sent home from their public schools, yet students who wear LGBTQ apparel are not sent home. And yes, these incidents have occurred in schools across Maryland. Teachers are allowed, even encouraged, to display LGBTQ themed flags and other LGBTQ displays, but a Christian teacher is prohibited from displaying a Christian flag or other Christian themed displays. So where is the actual equity here? Equity in our public schools only exists for one political group. This is the main reason why this Health Curriculum, filled with gender fluidity, LGBTQ practices, sexual acts and practices with graphic content, should not be presented in our public schools. It's not just the adult content, but it also violates the religious beliefs of thousands of students who are forced to attend public school because their families cannot afford private school or homeschool and this State of Maryland has no school choice initiative. I sometimes wonder if this was purposely set this way?

Second, after over a year and a half of our kids having been unnecessarily shut out of their schools for Covid, we now see as a result of the latest state test scores, just why the emphasis in schools should be placed on core academic subjects. I am in Carroll County. We were one of the first counties to allow students back into their classrooms and our test scores demonstrate exactly why we made the best choice and put our kids, not political ideology, before the kids. Carroll County actually performed in the top five in all subject areas. Carroll County also places the emphasis on core academic subjects versus pulling in political ideology into all of their subject areas. Of course, if this bill passes, Carroll County will lose its ability to decide which curricula choices are best for their kids and their families. Carroll County is not like Howard County, or Baltimore City. Relegating us and other counties to only one option that the state decides for us, does a disservice to the families that are supposed to be served in the school systems. It will lead to confusion, loss of buy-in and collaboration for all families, And it will lead to even more division among different types of families.

Eleanor Jones, Carroll County

