

OPPOSE HB119/SB199

Dear Delegates,

As a lifelong resident of Maryland and mother of a daughter and a son, I strongly oppose HB119 and SB199. This bill develops a new curriculum outside of the standard education for which public schools were designed, that is reading, writing, science and mathematics.

This bill creates a program mandated by the state with the state's concepts full of subject matter that is the primary responsibility of parents, not the state. The subject matter, as mandated by the state would give the state's perspective on the topics listed and others not listed which could be in conflict with the parents' value system. The topics listed are not neutral.

This bill also is in favor of removing the "Opt Out" option for parents, which would remove their rights to parent their children. In the past, permission slips went home for any subject matter outside of the school curricula of reading, writing, science and math. The parents were informed of the new material and determined whether their children would participate. With "opt out," children are automatically enrolled. The "opt out" forms are sent with children to bring home to their parents and return to the school. There is no accountability for the school; children are given the responsibility to inform their parents.

This bill makes the state through the public school system, the primary arbiter of a child's mental, physical and emotional health. This is an inappropriate use of the legislative body. There are many other topics you could focus on adding to the school programs, such as age-appropriate finances, invest in making all schools more secure, adding additional funding for school counselors at each school, or funding to each school to add more teachers and allow for smaller class sizes.

With the TN School Shooting that just occurred, this just further provides proof that additional gender and sex ideologies aren't needed in school, but rather need to be kept out of school. School is a place for learning school subjects only- Math, Science, Reading, Writing, PE. If you start including these ideologies, especially at such young ages, it will only further confuse our youth and add to the growing mental health crisis. Additionally, you remove religion more and more from the school systems yet you want to allow the state to control teaching our children about sexual and gender preferences, yet you aren't increasing staffing or counselors at each school, so these children that will be confused will have no one to talk through these issues with – and you think that isn't going to add to the mental health crisis as these kids grow up?

I ask that you support the family structure, parental rights and oppose HB119/SB199.

Kara Clemson

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