

Good afternoon, Chair and members of this committee. Hi, My name is Melissa Macuci Goshorn and I am a parent to 3 children in Calvert County public schools and the Maryland State Director of Power2Parent. I am here today to request an Amendment to this bill.

This bill would require every school district to teach the Maryland Health Framework in its entirety. Local Boards are worried about the lack of control and increased financial burden given the bill as written will give liberty to the state to make changes whenever they would like. Teachers and Staff are worried about the increased loss of instructional time on core subjects like Reading, Writing, Math, and Science given that the current allotted time for health will not be enough to teach the entirety of the framework. Parents, Staff, Child Psychologists, Sex Therapist, and Trauma Specialists are worried about the damage some of this curriculum will do if not taught by licensed medical professionals. Parents are also concerned about the current barriers some school systems and teachers put in place making curriculum review next to impossible without taking off a day of work.

If you are unclear about what the Framework really is or how it is currently being implemented in some Maryland Public Schools, watch my educational session. Presentation starts at min 8:20, Framework vs. Curriculum is explained at min 11:38. Diving deep into the framework at min 15:16, and the translation of framework into curriculum starting at min 18:28 with elementary school. 21:47 it gets into High School. <https://subspla.sh/2wqpf2w> More information about what is going on in Calvert County can be found at www.behindschooldoors.com as well as the full powerpoint presentations cited in this video. This bill will drastically change how and what is taught in health in almost all Maryland public elementary, middle, and high schools.

I oppose this bill in its entirety but after watching the hearing in the Ways & Means committee I feel several amendments is probably the best compromise at this time.

I have 2 amendments I am requesting on behalf of parents

1. Amendment to (c)(5)(l) should be revised to “And Procedures for a parent or guardian to do a complete electronic curriculum review to include all assignments, power points, articles, videos, reports, papers, and activities prior to submitting an OPT-IN Permission Slip for any aspect of the Maryland Health Framework for each grade in which Health is taught.”

I have 3 amendments I am requesting on behalf of school staff and child specialists.

1. Amendment to (c)(2) should be modified. The spirit should be that changes to the health education framework shall have 18months lead time for implementation AND/OR the cost for implementation will be covered in full by the Maryland State Department of Education.
2. Amendment to (c)(4)(l) Age-appropriate is subjective. Needs to be defined and cited by multiple child expert sources.
3. Amendment to (c)(4)(l) Should be revised to say “Each County Board shall establish a committee, appointed by the elected local Board of Education, consisting of 2 child

psychologist(s), 2 child trauma specialists(s), 2 parents in support of and 2 parents in opposition to the Maryland Health Education Framework, (2) pediatricians, health teachers from every grade level, and (2) administration; to ensure curriculum is balanced, not biased, and will not do harm to students.

A lot of the people in support of this bill talk about human trafficking, sexually transmitted disease, and healthy relationships. There seems to be an opportunity for the state to offer parent training and education to keep their kids safe through parental education so the schools can focus on academics.

As elected officials you know how important it is that you speak on behalf of your constituents, understanding that the needs of your district may be very different than the needs of another. Well, SB0199 takes away the local school system's ability to properly educate their specific student population. What the children in Baltimore City need, are very different than the issues the children in Calvert County are experiencing, for example. Health Education is supposed to be developed using information from each districts Health Department, the local school systems climate surveys, and the observations within the school buildings. All of this very helpful data would be useless if SB0199 passes because all students in every district would have the same health education, watering down the needs of the individual students.

Another concern with SB0199 as written is that it will allow the State to change the framework at their discretion. If a system purchases health curriculum, develops health curriculum, or takes a hybrid approach to curriculum development, the change in framework will increase the financial burden to the individual districts, every time. Ask yourself, how can you approve this bill when it gives them the freedom to change the framework at any time, with the simple stroke of a brush.

I've heard from several health professionals in Maryland schools that are worried about the time commitment teaching this framework will require. Currently, very little, if any, school districts are able to teach every item in the framework in the allotted health timeframes or class credits. They pick and choose the most important subjects to ensure they can teach the most important pieces at the depth appropriate for their unique student body. I urge each of you to ask yourselves, how is this bill ensuring the framework represents what your constituents want? How is this bill ensuring Maryland Students can compete on the World Stage academically. Maryland had one of the largest academic downfalls in COVID due to the decisions of the Maryland State Department of Education. At a time when Maryland children are barely showing proficiency in reading and math assessments, adding more time to discuss health topics seems reckless and out of touch with the needs of Maryland children. Maryland children need more time learning reading, writing, and math and less time talking about gender identity in elementary school and anal and oral sex in middle school.

Child psychologists, trauma specialists, and sex therapists across the Country disagree on the topic of teaching Gender Identity in the way the framework suggests. Some argue it has created a social contagion in Transgenderism, especially in middle and high schools where children have

always had a hard time figuring out their changing bodies. I don't think anyone disagrees with teaching children to respect those that are different from them. But many disagree with the depth and avenues some school systems have gone.

The bill states it will teach "Age appropriate" education. Who is determining and ensuring age appropriateness of these sensitive topics? Currently in Calvert County an ELA teacher is responsible for overseeing the creation of all Health Curriculum. A long-term sub in Calvert County, who is barely a legal adult, is currently teaching this framework to our 7th graders due to staffing issues. I think MANY in the room with you today and more all across the state and Country would argue that teaching Oral, Anal, Solo, and Vaginal sex in 7th grade is NOT age appropriate. Especially when the curriculum is not created by a child psychologists in collaboration with other child development specialists and when it is being taught by a long term sub without the necessary training. This is happening across the country due to the number of open teaching positions. It will continue happening even if this bill passes into law.

Members of the Senate, please oppose bill SB0199. It takes away local control, increases financial burden on local districts, removes the necessary focus on reading, writing, and math, takes away the parents ability to be involved in their children's education, and ultimately hurts the children.