

Witness: Katherine Strauch Sullivan
Jurisdiction: Baltimore County
Bill: SB199 Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework
Sponsor: Senators [Lam](#), [Rosapepe](#), [Hettleman](#), and [Washington](#)
Position: AGAINST

Dear Committee,

My name is Katherine Sullivan and I am a resident of Baltimore County. As a mother of four school age children with over 21 years of parenting experience and 18 years in the school system, **I oppose SB199.**

The 2021-2022 school year ELA and Math assessment results were abysmal. Here is a small sampling:

The 2021-2022 ELA assessments:

- 45% proficient in grades 3 and 4
- 40% proficient in grade 5
- 53% of 10th grade English students were proficient High school English 10th

In math, the results were even more concerning:

- Only 17.6% of sixth grade students were proficient in math
- Just 6.5% of students who took the grade 8 assessment were proficient.
- Only 14.5% high school students tested proficient in Algebra I

Maryland's education system is failing our kids. We must we prioritize reading, writing, and math. We must not be distracted by side programs that will divert our eyes off our children's proficiency in ELA and Math. This Bill is NOT NEEDED. We already have a comprehensive Health program that was thoughtfully and professionally put together for our children less than 3 years ago. We must stop this "catch of the day" constant re-writing and revising our curriculums to suit the cause du jour. We must stick to professional, true, tried, and common-sense standards.

I am sure this program is offered up in good faith with sincere intentions. The problem is, these well-intended programs never end where they begin. Invariably they only serve to embolden our teachers and our government to go way beyond the scope of the prescribed curriculum. To say otherwise is to deny reality. Don't believe me? Last week my friend's daughter was in "health class" and her teacher pulled her aside to tell this student she thought it was a "very bad idea" NOT to have sex before marriage. For

some of you who may think this teacher's "care and concern" is a wonderful thing - I ask you this: How would you feel if that same teacher pulled your child aside and told them "marriage is only between a man and a woman"? Programs like this open the door for such ideological indoctrination and BOTH sides need their private values protected! The health and mental wellness of our children is critically important – so let's leave it to the private health professionals and parents to guide our children and keep our teachers focused on graduating our children with the ability to think critically and with high proficiencies in reading, writing, and math.

SB199 is not necessary. Vote NO on SB199.

Respectfully,

Katherine Strauch Sullivan