

## **SB199/HB119 Comprehensive Health Education Framework**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senators Lam, Rosapepe, Washington, and Hetlleman and Delegate Atterbeary

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Hearing and House Ways and Means Committee

**Organization Submitting:** Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

**Person Submitting:** Dr. Nicole Hollywood, LSPC

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB199/HB119 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

Comprehensive health education is imperative and its benefits are backed overwhelmingly by the research. This is particularly vital for LGBTQIA+ youth who are at higher risk of certain conditions, have less access to health care, and have worse health outcomes as a result of a lack of access to affirming care, misinformation, and inequities in our health education curriculum that keep many LGBTQIA+ youth from developing appropriate health literacy.

LGBTQIA+ youth need and deserve to learn in settings that are inclusive of their experiences and that provide them with the education necessary to stay safe and healthy. Yet, LGBTQIA+ youth on the Eastern Shore currently sit in classrooms where their teachers and textbooks fail to appropriately address their identities, behaviors, and experiences.

The Lower Shore Progressive Caucus recognizes that students who receive comprehensive health education make healthier and more informed choices and as such supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.