

Dear Committee Members,

As a parent and constituent of this state, I urge you to advocate against SB199, Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework. Senate Bill199 seeks to strip local control from our BoEs and force all MD public schools to teach radical gender theories and inappropriate sexual topics to our children using the Comprehensive Health Education Framework which was developed and pushed out by the Maryland State Dept. of Education (MSDE) in 2022.

This framework presents very controversial topics, to which there is no consensus. Schools should be teaching the facts: reading, writing, math, science, history, arts, etc. Health and sexual education should focus on biology and reproduction. It should not include lessons teaching children a gender ideology or explicit sexual acts.

In this framework, kindergarteners will be taught gender theory - including the belief that there are more than two genders, and that a person can choose their gender. This is a belief (not a fact, no scientific basis) of some, but not all. In seventh grade, our 12-year-olds will be taught about anal sex and self-sexual pleasure.

Not only is this an affront on parental rights issue, but it is also a governmental overreach issue. We have local government, including BoE's for a reason - they are elected by the people to represent the people in their districts. The MSDE is made up of appointed officials, who were not elected, yet representatives in the General Assembly are attempting to take control away from local BoE's and force compliance with the MSDE's radical ideas. The Supreme Court's Parental Rights Doctrine maintains that parents have a fundamental right to direct the upbringing of their children.

The focus of the MSDE and the legislature should be to serve the best interest of our children. Provide them with safe schools that focus on academics where they can learn and thrive. Our children deserve nothing less. Please vote against SB199 and support fundamental parental rights and oppose government overreach.

I, and many other parents in this state, strongly oppose this bill along with HB119, however, IF this bill passes, I URGE you to at the very least - put an AMENDMENT IN FOR AN OPT-IN only. This will allow parents to retain control over what is appropriate and not appropriate for their child to be learning in school.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Pratta