

Delegates/Senators,

I am writing to express a strong opposition to House Bill 119/SB0199. This bill removes the needed autonomy local school boards have to form curriculum suited to the students in their classrooms. The bill was introduced in an attempt to adopt a state health curriculum. The amendments to the bill eliminate the necessary tailoring required by professional teachers, to conform with the structure of the classroom demographic. HB 119/SB0199 as passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee would result in a total state takeover of local control over all curriculum frameworks, standards, and even instructional materials.

This law will likely **increase toxicity** in teacher work climate resulting in increase losses to teacher retention and could impact parental support of Maryland Public Education. The law as proposed will also eliminate the opt out option for families that find the curriculum is not appropriate for their child. This would force students from families that do not agree with the instruction for cultural or religious reasons into this instruction.

Specifically, this bill would mandate that local school systems follow “every element of the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction” for public schools established by the State Board of Education. The bill would also mandate that “all curriculum guides, courses of study, resource materials and other teaching aids” shall be in accordance with the state policy and program of instruction adopted by the State Board. In these alarming and unprecedented ways, HB 119 reaches into the boardroom and the classroom, severely limiting decision making of local boards, superintendents, department chairs, and teachers in the classroom.

I am also troubled that HB 119 would empower the State Superintendent of Schools to enforce local compliance by withholding massive amounts of state funding. HB 119 grants absolute authority to the State Superintendent to decide if a local school system is not following every detail of the state standards and then withhold millions of dollars in state funding.

I hope that you agree with me (your constituent) and the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) to OPPOSE HB0119/SB0199 and support local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, grading policies, and instructional programs and the adoption of statewide laws and regulations that reflect a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement. HB 119 fails this test. Teachers will thank you for your “Nay” on this toxic bill.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.