

Good morning,

I am writing to ask the General Assembly to oppose HB119 & SB199.

Local boards of education were elected by the citizens in each district to represent them, their interests, and their needs. Stripping power from local elected boards of education is antithetical to our republic system of government.

Additionally, this framework presents very controversial topics, of 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 ideology - including the belief that there are more than two genders and a person can choose their children. This is a *belief* (not a fact, as there is no scientific basis for this claim) of some, but not all. In seventh grade, our 12 -year-olds will be taught about anal sex and solo sex.

These are not appropriate topics for schools to teach. These are topics that should be discussed by parents or caregivers, at their discretion. Forcing these topics on children, stripping power from local schools, and taking away the fundamental rights of parents to the care, custody, and control of their children, is a slap in the face to the American system of government and parental rights.

Right now, Maryland schools are failing our children - 2022 MCAP scores reveal Maryland children are deficient in almost every category, Baltimore City schools have no air conditioning, and there have been recent cases of fraud in city schools. There are real problems facing our schools and children. Wes Moore's campaign slogan was "leave no one behind". I find this ironic, as Maryland children have long been left behind.

The focus of the MSDE and the legislature should be to serve the best interests of our children - provide them with safe schools that focus on academics where they can learn and thrive. Our children deserve nothing less.

Thank you,
Jennifer Fold