

January 30, 2023

Opposition to HB119 & SB199

To Whom it May Concern,

At a time when Maryland public schools systems' state test scores are at their lowest in academic achievement in years, and at a time when our kids are still trying to catch up from having been kept out of their schools for over a year during the COVID shutdown, the last thing our kids need is a partisan, gender ideology being mandated for a health curriculum. Recent state test results from 2021 showed a 13 percent drop in Language Arts proficiency and a 16 percent drop in math proficiency among third through eighth grade Maryland students. Simply put, our kids are ill prepared when (or if) they graduate from high school, and MSDE is placing emphasis on a highly controversial, partisan health curriculum to be mandated for all of our public school districts.

Another issue regarding HB119 is that this greatly undermines local district decision making when it comes to curriculum choices. If this bill passes, then we are led to consider the future implications of more state control over decision making processes in our schools that should be instead left up to our individual Boards of Education. This type of state level control becomes less student focused, less family oriented, and even less about our community needs. We live in an extremely diverse state with regions of people who have different religions, political ideologies, specific cultural beliefs, various backgrounds and life experiences. It is important to recognize and value everyone's experiences and beliefs, but this is best left to each community to decide how to handle each community's needs – not the state.

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