



BILL NO: House Bill 119
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework
- Established
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
HEARING DATE: February 1, 2023
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB 119.**

House Bill 119 would require the State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to develop a comprehensive health education framework. This framework must include certain topics including safety and violence prevention. The bill also requires a committee review and comment on the curriculum.

The ultimate objective for MNADV is to prevent intimate partner violence from occurring rather than intervening once it has already occurred. A multi-pronged approach must be employed to achieve this goal including education on healthy relationships in schools. The CDC states that “[s]ocial-emotional learning programs for youth promote expectations for mutually respectful, caring, non-violent relationships among young people and work with youth to help them develop social-emotional skills such as empathy, respect, and healthy communication and conflict resolution skills.”¹

While the current comprehensive health education framework was recently updated and includes many important topics, it does not include ***education on the safe and healthy use of technology and online communications to avoid violence and exploitation***. MNADV suggests that amendment language be included to specify that these topics must be included in the comprehensive health education framework in addition to the requirement that there be ***education on healthy and non-violent relationships***. In addition, the committee established to review the curriculum does not include subject matter experts. MNADV suggests that ***subject matter experts be included in the creation of curriculum*** to ensure that it reflects the most recent research and best practices in the necessary areas of instruction.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report with amendments on HB 119.**

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>