



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
House Bill 1430: Education – Public Schools – Parents’ Rights (Education Bill of Rights for Families Act)**

Ways and Means Committee

Position: Oppose

March 6, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates committed to championing the faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, a comprehensive plan to transform and improve Maryland’s public education system. **Strong Schools Maryland urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430**, proposing to grant the parents of public school students certain increased oversight regarding information and communication from the local schools. While we recognize the importance of parental involvement in our children’s education, this proposed piece of legislation undermines the principles of the Blueprint and impedes our State’s progress towards providing all students with high quality education.

Maryland’s established educational standards prioritize equitable access to a comprehensive and World-Class curriculum and educational experiences. Granting parents the authority to opt their children out of certain instruction could disrupt the continuity of planned curriculum, compromising the standards that were implemented to meet the needs of a diverse range of students. As parents have increasingly chosen to opt their children out of lessons and assessments, the NIH found that teacher effectiveness in the classroom decreases as the magnitude of opt outs increases.¹ Not only does the bill pose a risk to the continuity of curriculum and the effectiveness of our educators which diverges from best practices, it also could implicate disruptions to social development and limited preparedness for future challenges.

According to PEN American, an organization dedicated to championing the freedom to share and access ideas and literature, this bill echoes education intimidation bills that are currently sweeping in influence over the country. While these bill are stated to protect “parents’ right” to oversee their child’s curriculum and school experience (which is currently permitted under enacted legislation as the opportunity to inspect and object to different school curricula already exists), these proposed bills radically expand avenues for people to intimidate educators to self censor in order to avoid legal retribution.²

Strong Schools Maryland urges the General Assembly to recognize that House Bill 1430 and similar education intimidation bills are part of a broader phenomenon that endangers the access that every student in Maryland should have to a World-Class school. It is imperative to resist efforts that seek to undermine the integrity of a comprehensive education system.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430.

For more information, contact Kenzie Funk: kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org