



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**TESTIMONY OF JEREMY BROWNING
DIRECTOR, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON LGBTQIA+ AFFAIRS
UNFAVORABLE STATEMENT ON HB1430
PUBLIC SCHOOLS - SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS - PROHIBITED IN
LIBRARIES AND MEDIA CENTERS**

March 6, 2024

Ways and Means Committee

The Hon. Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
The Hon. Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, my name is Jeremy Browning(he/him), and I am the Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. The Commission was created by the 2021 Maryland General Assembly and later altered in 2023 to assess challenges facing our LGBTQIA+ communities, establish best practices and recommendations for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and provide testimony to legislative and administrative bodies.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs is in strong opposition to House Bill 1430, which seeks to create a parental Education Bill of Rights. While this bill purports to uphold parents' rights in education, its provisions raise significant concerns regarding the well-being and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ students and families in Maryland's public schools.

The Commission acknowledges the importance of parental rights and the right for all students and families to be reflected in our public schools, creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment for all students. We are deeply concerned that provisions in House Bill 1430 will undermine the efforts to create inclusive environments for LGBTQIA+ students since the bill's language specifically targets family life and human sexuality, comprehensive sexual health education and vital HIV prevention education.

The current comprehensive health education program, as required under the Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework addresses family life and human sexuality in an age-appropriate manner and parental rights. This Framework already requires local education agencies to establish policies, guidelines, and procedures for parents to opt-out their students from family life and human sexuality instruction in all grades.

Furthermore, House Bill 1430 grants parents the right to access all school academic, attendance, health and medical records relating to their child. While this may seem innocuous, it could have severe consequences for LGBTQIA+ students whose parents may not be accepting of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Forced disclosure could result in outing, harassment, or even homelessness for vulnerable youth.

In closing, we believe parental involvement in education is crucial, but the bill's language risks undermining the autonomy and safety of LGBTQIA+ students. The bill is unnecessary as parents and guardians already have ample opportunities to engage with local school districts in collaboration with administrators and educators. School districts have opt-out policies and this additional layer of legislation may create unnecessary burdens on school districts and limit the diversity of perspectives available to students.

For these reasons the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs strongly urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430.

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