

INFORMATIONAL
House Bill 730
Education – Public Middle Schools – Course on Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on House Bill 730, which would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum standards and county boards of education to develop and implement a curriculum for a course on the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction for public middle school students in the State.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA tenaciously advocates for the policies and programs that will give our students access to the resources and knowledge they need to achieve their full potential. We understand that our students' wellbeing and awareness of high-risk behaviors affects their academic and nonacademic outcomes. Yet MSEA has longstanding concerns about legislatively mandating curriculum, especially regarding the creation of new courses and units. We believe that it is the purview of the MSDE and the State Board of Education to develop and implement curriculum standards to meet the academic needs of the students served in Maryland's public schools. It is then the responsibility of local districts to determine how best to implement a program of study that best serves the needs of their students.

We appreciate the intent of this legislation. However, developing a new course raises concerns about the amount of coursework already required of middle school students and puts pressure on student and staff schedules. We believe that local boards and educators are best suited to determine how best to include such issues into current required course content.