

Dear Ways and Means Committee, and fellow homeschooling families:

I am the director of a non-public entity registered with the Maryland State Department of Education, known as the Traditional Learning Community. With connections to over 200 homeschooling families, I can confidently affirm their keen interest in becoming the 40th state including Washington DC to permit student participation in ungraded programs and extracurricular activities at public schools. This sentiment is shared not only by the families I represent but also by me personally, as a mother.

Having homeschooled since 1999, I have cherished every aspect of the journey, save for the difficult task of informing my six children that they are unable to engage in tryouts for local public school sports teams, drama clubs, and robotics programs. Both my husband and I were heavily involved in sports during our formative years, even competing at the collegiate level. Our children share the same passion for sports, yet our local high school missed the opportunity for all four of our homeschooled graduates to represent their community. One of my children achieved the remarkable feat of being a two-time All-American soccer player on a Christian team, but he missed out on potential college scholarships and the chance to unite the community through his achievements.

Having previously resided in Nevada, where homeschoolers enjoyed participation in extracurricular activities, the stark contrast upon moving to Maryland was disheartening. This lack of opportunity could potentially dissuade families from relocating to the state. I believe this sentiment is shared by many families considering a move to Maryland. The prospect of Calvert County initiating such inclusive measures is encouraging. For a child aspiring to play sports at the collegiate level, the passage of such a bill could indeed sway families towards relocating to Calvert County during the pilot program. The right for our children to access the same opportunities and privileges as their peers is paramount. It is discriminatory to deny homeschoolers the chance to try out for or join open positions at public schools, as our children are integral members of the public fabric.

I urge you to support the progression of this bill towards enactment. The potential benefits for children attending both public schools and homeschooling are substantial, fostering a stronger sense of community and collaboration. The existing COMAR regulations for reviewing homeschooling programs underline the meticulous oversight in place, a fact I am intimately acquainted with through my assistance to homeschooling families. The time is ripe for Maryland to embrace this change and become the 40th state to recognize the rights of homeschoolers. Let us seize this opportunity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warm regards,

Amy L. DeArmas

