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Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0293- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**

**TO:** Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0293, **County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**

Recently, the Frederick County Board of Education meeting shows the need for this bill.

Frederick County Board of Education member Colt Black is facing criticism over comments he made on Wednesday about transgender students while talking about the school district's policy on gender identity. Referring to the part of the policy that instructs teachers and Frederick County Public Schools staff members to use a student's preferred name and pronouns, Black said: "Just as much as you have a right to be you, we have our right to be free from you." <sup>1</sup>

This transphobic statement by a member of the Board of Education has been roundly condemned. It shows how important this bill is. This bill would require each member of a county board of education to complete certain antibias training at least once during the member's term.

Whether the bias is conscious or unconscious, the demonstration that an elected member of the board does not feel he represents all the students delineates the need for this training.

Unconscious bias training offers several benefits, including improved workplace diversity and inclusivity. It helps employees recognize and overcome ingrained prejudices, fostering a more open and respectful work environment. This training enhances decision-making processes and team collaboration by reducing biased behaviors. <sup>2</sup>

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0293.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/education/schools/public\\_k-12/school-board-members-comments-on-gender-identity-policy-spark-criticism/article\\_e1711cf2-aa47-5421-88ba-4fbb083d58b7.html](https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/education/schools/public_k-12/school-board-members-comments-on-gender-identity-policy-spark-criticism/article_e1711cf2-aa47-5421-88ba-4fbb083d58b7.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.continu.com/blog/implicit-bias-training#:~:text=Unconscious%20bias%20training%20offers%20several,open%20and%20respectful%20work%20environment.>