

Written Testimony for **HB 324/SB 293: County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**: Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee & EEE Committee:

I understand the reasoning behind this bill. All County Board Members should be respectful of the public, students, teachers, etc.

I disagree with the need for this bill, however. I believe that when voters vote, they take into consideration how their chosen candidate treats other people. When you research a candidate, there are usually several different videos of that candidate speaking during their campaign, even if a voter has never seen the candidate in person. Therefore, we as voters already know (or have a really good idea, based on the candidate's videos and previous behavior) how a candidate will conduct himself or herself when that candidate reaches office. I do not see the need for this bill. I feel the State of Maryland will be approaching the arena of compelled speech if this bill is passed. Why else would this bill be passed unless our legislators want to compel a County Board member's right to free speech by indicating what they can and cannot talk about or how they are to word their comments? It makes no sense to have this bill passed into law otherwise.

One of the goals of this training is to "...Aim to reduce implicit bias..." Define implicit bias and explain who would use it. Would only white/caucasian Americans use "implicit bias"? Would members of "marginalized" minority groups be considered to have "implicit bias"? If not, why not? I know people from lots of different races and backgrounds, and I know people in your "marginalized" minority list that have what I would consider to be prejudices or stereotypes of other people in other minority groups.

Also, in your "list" of marginalized minorities, I do not see any mention of WOMEN. Why are WOMEN not listed in this legislation? I know the bill reads "...and other historically marginalized racial and ethnic minorities..." I don't think WOMEN count as either a racial minority or an ethnic minority. Yet WOMEN are not listed.

Also, there are policies in most County Boards that "...Seek to achieve schools that are more inclusive and tolerant of students, faculty, and staff regardless of an individual's race, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity,

religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or disability...” Therefore, it does not need to be duplicated in this bill.

In summary, I do not agree with the need for this bill. It encroaches into the arena of compelled speech, and is an affront to free speech. The “marginalized” minority list is incomplete. There is no definition or explanation of “implicit bias” and who would use “implicit bias” other than the implied white/caucasian Americans.

Therefore, I implore you to **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals
Mother of 3 and Maryland resident