



## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB135/SB948 Family Law- Fundamental Parental Rights**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, Board Member

Position: **OPPOSE**

I am submitting this testimony in **OPPOSITION** to SB566/HB666 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

At Salisbury PFLAG, we recognize that a robust education builds knowledge and extends perspective. This means that students need to both be able to see themselves in what they're reading and studying as reflection of themselves and their histories, but they also must be encouraged to see outwards and consider perspectives and experiences different from their own. We also know that exposing learners to only limited and skewed versions of history, health, or literature that neglect entire populations using insular and homogenous materials forces them to develop a skewed inaccurate version of the diversity of our society. This is problematic for underrepresented groups – particularly LGBTQIA+ students and students of color and the result is the creation of a hostile and unsupportive educational climate that research shows contribute to lower academic performance, lower GPA, increased absences, increased likelihood of school dropout, and less likelihood of attending an institution of higher.

For many children K-12 schools are safe spaces from homes that are often unaffirming. Places where they can seek support for their mental and emotional health and deal with issues that impact many young people. While so called "parental rights" proposals are promoted as given parents greater control over their children's education, they are in actually purposed to target and erase historically marginalized groups.

When parents work to support teachers and schools the result enhances learner outcomes but, this bill does not seek to strengthen and support our educators. Rather, it seeks to promote parent involvement as a means to undermine educators' professional judgments, bully teachers, and advance narrow self-serving narratives. Should this bill pass, it will drive a chasm creating a wedge between parents and the education community that will lead to many highly qualified teachers exiting the profession.

Emboldening close-minded people with the opportunity to object to curriculum, programming, activities, and materials, , use of preferred pronouns, accurate health information, lessons, and digital media based on beliefs about morality, religion, personal philosophy, or political ideology is dangerous and only promotes intolerance and tunnel vision. Accordingly, Salisbury PFLAG opposes this bill and recommends an UNFAVORABLE report in committee.