



Moms for Liberty Maryland Legislative Committee urges an Unfavorable Report for HB 0161. Parents around the state have raised serious concerns regarding the gender identity and sexual orientation concepts in the Health Curriculum Framework for every grade level from Pre-K through 12th grade.

In 2019, gender identity and sexual orientation concepts were incorporated into the Family Life unit of the MD Health Curriculum Framework. These changes slid under the radar of many families and many were shocked when our local school systems began to implement the new framework.

Those on the Standards & Frameworks Validation Committee who worked to include these concepts in the framework did so with a focus on the LGBTQ+ community. This focus was in response to Youth Behavior Risk Survey results which indicate that students identifying as LGBTQ+ have a higher prevalence of health disparities including depression, suicidal ideation, and being victimized by bullying and other forms of violence. While this subset of students may indeed have more issues to contend with than their peers, there are several reasons why it is not appropriate to discuss these topics in the Family Life unit, or at all in the public-school classroom:

1. **RESPECT:** All students deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of whether their peers accept their lifestyle or identity. This can be addressed in the framework under the bullying & harassment units for all grade levels. It would go a long way to teach students that you need to be kind to everyone, even if you do not like something about them, no matter what that is. This is not something students can opt out of, and it applies to all.

2. **RULES & ENFORCEMENT:** The public school system has moved away from holding children accountable for their bad behavior. School rules surrounding bullying need to be made clear to students and their parents, and appropriate punishments enforced.

3. **PARENTAL RIGHTS:** Including gender identity and sexual orientation in the Family Life unit, or any public-school lesson, is inappropriate. These topics are related to personalities, preferences, and values, topics for which parents have full autonomy. Parents who would like their children to know the science behind sexual disease, reproduction and pregnancy will now opt their children out of these lessons to avoid ideological discussions on matters that should be handled at home.

4. **SCIENCE:** Pertaining to gender identity and expression, there is no scientific consensus on this topic. Children vs. adults, social contagion vs. actual mental struggles, medical/social interventions vs. watchful waiting, all these issues are very controversial and being argued very publicly right now. The classroom is no place for topics that are not strictly evidence based and proven fact. That cannot be said for terms like “sex assigned at birth” or “gender identity.” To uphold the standards of all educational institutions, ideological principles cannot be relayed to students as factual in any classroom for any reason.

5. **HEALTH:** The medical landscape in Maryland is very friendly towards providing medical interventions to children who are confused about their gender. Interventions such as puberty blockers, cross sex hormones, and surgeries to try to assist children in presenting as the opposite sex are touted as being compassionate care. However, these interventions are far from compassionate, many with long term complications and legal challenges. Puberty blockers are not reversible and have not been adequately studied for side effects of permanently preventing puberty. Cross sex hormones are also not reversible, and can leave people sterile and without normal sexual function. Lawsuits are stemming from these complications in greater numbers every day. For example, one young 20-year-old in California (Clementine Breen) is currently suing multiple CA healthcare providers for medical negligence for fast tracking her to puberty blockers (age 12), cross sex hormones (ages 13-19) and a double mastectomy (age 14). <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/justice/3252826/transgender-youth-doctor-historic-lawsuit/>

When you tell students in the classroom that they can identify as the opposite sex, and couple that with the medical interventions our politics insist are “gender affirming care,” the ultimate result is in no way healthy for the vulnerable children we are attempting to protect.

Please have an open mind when considering these arguments. Return our school system to one that focuses on providing students with the education they need to be productive adults and gain employment. The role of the teacher is to support the student in their academic career, not to become their counselor and confidant. We the parents will accept all responsibility for nurturing our children and doing everything we can to support their mental and physical health.

**Moms for Liberty Maryland Legislative Committee
respectfully requests an Unfavorable Report on HB 0161.**