

I strongly support **HB1132** for the following reasons.

### **1. Protects Students Who Act in Self-Defense**

- The bill ensures that students who **reasonably defend themselves** from an attack are **not unfairly punished**.
- Without such protections, victims of bullying or unexpected attacks may face **the same disciplinary actions** as aggressors.

### **2. Encourages Fair and Thorough Investigations**

- Requires school administrators to **investigate** before issuing punishment, ensuring **due process** rather than immediate, blanket discipline.
- Prevents situations where students defending themselves are **automatically presumed guilty**.

### **3. Reduces Fear of Unjust Punishment**

- Encourages students to report incidents rather than fearing that **defending themselves could lead to suspension or expulsion**.
- Prevents “zero-tolerance” policies from unfairly punishing students who **had no choice but to fight back**.

### **4. Helps Prevent Retaliation and Escalation**

- Clear policies for investigating fights can help **identify patterns of bullying** and **protect victims** from future incidents.
- Ensures that real **aggressors are held accountable** rather than punishing both parties equally.

### **5. Keeps Student Records Fair and Accurate**

- Allows for the **expungement** of disciplinary records when investigations find that a student acted **only in self-defense**.
- Prevents **permanent damage** to a student’s academic record over a justified act of self-protection.

### **6. Promotes a Safer School Environment**

- Encourages schools to **differentiate between aggressors and victims**, leading to **better conflict resolution**.

- Students will feel **safer knowing they won't be punished for protecting themselves.**

**Please vote Favorable toward HB1132.**

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Howard County