

Dear Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing in **OPPOSITION** to HB161.

Of particular concern is the establishment of the comprehensive health education framework to be developed between the Maryland Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Health. I reviewed the 2020 Framework and based on that I don't believe these two departments have the best interest of children, or the future of Maryland, in mind.

This framework does not address truth-based or biology-based health education: Many of the subjects do not stem from basic biology as one would assume for health education; they do not address the mental well-being of children or teens, and in many cases have a negative impact on the mental health of students. The bills states that the first topic of the education framework is Health Promotion; except the framework also includes gender identity and sexual orientation, directly opposite of health promotion. Gender identity is a product of culture, a relatively new idea, and is not based in any scientific or educational framework. Yet, this bill designates it be part of a health education framework. Gender Identity is nothing but a result, or consequence, of Identity Marxism. Our schools should be teaching biologically based health and general education. All 24 counties have less than 40% of students in grades 3 – 8 that are PROFICIENT in math, that means that over 60% of our students in Maryland public schools are not meeting the bare minimum. You, as legislators, are failing the children of Maryland to focus on "intersectionality" rather than educating them and encouraging critical thinking skills. You are not setting these children up for success in the lives; rather you are keeping them ignorant.

This bill strips the rights of parents: All parents have the right to choose what is best for their children, it is not the duty of the school system to choose to teach extremely sensitive, and oftentimes damaging, material to children. You place it on the local county boards to determine the opt-out policy but as it stands, the framework does not have an option for families to "opt-out" of the material until 3rd grade. What exactly is being taught to students, with no parental oversight or agreement, during those initial 4 years? What harm and long-term effects will discussing sexuality have on these children? Parental rights are integral to the raising up of good citizens. Yet, you are intent with stripping these rights and obstructing parents from parenting.

This bill removes autonomy from county school systems: These bills also place an undue burden upon the local public school systems. They are tasked with developing curriculum around this subject matter, in many cases subject matter that the local level is not qualified to develop. This means purchasing curriculum, only furthering the standardization of materials that resembles Critical Race Theory, a deeply divisive form of Marxism. Therefore, this legislation in fact removes autonomy from the county school board, while also placing more unfunded mandates on the local government.

With that, I stand in opposition to this legislation. I pray that you would see the faults and harm in this legislation and withdraw it from consideration.

Regards,



Rebecca Hamilton
Cecil County Council, District 2