

House Bill 161 - Ways and Means - Favorable with Amendments

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Please give House Bill 161, regarding a comprehensive health education framework, a FAVORABLE report, with amendments.

Health education is incredibly important for the present and futures of our children. An accurate education about human sexuality is especially important because it can be much more difficult to find online.

I really appreciate that the sponsors of House Bill 161 recognize the existence of LGBTQ+ people and want to require an education encompassing gender identity and sexual orientation. I hope that remains intact in the bill.

I would like for House Bill 161 to be amended by removing (5) (I) and (5) (III), where parents are allowed to opt out of the Family Life and Human Sexuality portion of health education, and where teachers must provide alternatives. People who have elected to utilize the public schools should not have the right to opt their children out of portions of it. It is the responsibility of a public education system to educate the children in those schools. If the parents don't want for their children to learn what is in the public school curricula, they should homeschool or put their children in private schools. There are plenty of ways to make either of those options work. Family life and human sexuality topics are even more important than classes like algebra, and parents wouldn't be permitted to opt their children out of math classes in a public school no matter how misinformed they are about Arabic numerals.

I urge you to give House Bill 161 a favorable report, and to remove the opt out parts of the bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD