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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0161- POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework –
Established**

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0161, **Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework – Established**

The American Academy of Pediatrics has documented *The Importance of Access to Comprehensive Sex Education*¹

Impacts of a lack of comprehensive sex education for all youth can include: Less use of condoms, leading to higher risk of STIs, including HIV. Less use of contraception, leading to higher risk of unplanned pregnancy. Less understanding and increased stigma and shame around the spectrum of gender and sexual identity.

This bill acknowledges this conclusion from a respected medical academy and would require the State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to develop a comprehensive health education framework. It would instruct each county board of education as a requirement to create an age-appropriate curriculum that is consistent with the comprehensive health education framework. For those who believe in their parental rights to determine what and when their child is introduced to any of these concepts it requires each county board to establish policies, guidelines, and procedures for a parent or guardian to opt out of the family life and human sexuality topics for a certain student, subject to a certain prohibition.

The National Center for Health Statistics² in 2022 found that there were 10.9 (births per 1,000 females 15-19 years of age). This bill contemplates Maryland driving that birth rate for teens down by education.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0161.

¹ <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/adolescent-sexual-health/equitable-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health-care-for-all-youth/the-importance-of-access-to-comprehensive-sex-education/#:~:text=Impacts%20of%20a%20lack%20of,of%20gender%20and%20sexual%20identity.>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/maryland/md.htm>