



**Informational- House Bill 355/SB254**  
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**We Seek Your Amendment of HB355/SB254**

Maryland Right to Life will champion any sincere effort to prevent sex trafficking, particularly of minor children. We applaud the bills' sponsors for their good intentions.

However, we cannot support any policy that authorizes abortion businesses and activists to peddle their deadly wares to vulnerable school children. Without a specific amendment to prohibit state or county contracts with abortion providers or abortion-invested organizations, like Planned Parenthood, Advocates for Youth or the National Women's Law Center, this bill would expand the reach of the abortion industry to school-aged children during the school day without the knowledge or consent of parents, exacerbating existing abortion coercion in our schools.

The abortion industry contributes to sexual trafficking and cannot be trusted with the care of Maryland school children. Planned Parenthood has demonstrated that they are unwilling to report suspected child abuse, rape and sexual trafficking to law enforcement authorities as required by law as Mandatory Reporters of suspected abuse. Instead they shield sexual predators and enable them to continue to victimize women and children. The Maryland General Assembly has further subjected pregnant women and girls to harm by enacting a series of Abortionist Shield laws, which deny legal remedy to women and girls trafficked into Maryland for abortion purposes, or exposed to dangerous chemical abortions through interstate telabortion.

The abortion industry also is compensated by the State to develop and contribute to the formulation of the **Maryland Health Education Framework** and in particular the radical *sexuality education* curriculum that they have imposed on local school districts. Parents only authorized schools to instruct children on the science of human biology and reproduction. However, the approved state curriculum, instructs elementary aged children in radical and experimental sex acts without sufficient informed consent about the risks and consequences.

The abortion industry's self-serving curricula are neither medically accurate nor age appropriate. It is an egregious conflict of interest for the State to empower the abortion industry, which profits from unplanned pregnancies, to be entrusted to instruct schoolchildren on matters of

reproductive health, and especially sex trafficking. Elective abortion is not healthcare, is hostile to human reproduction and should not be a standard part of school instruction on the issue.

### **Maryland School Health Curriculum is Neither Medically Accurate Nor Age Appropriate**

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that sexuality education be medically accurate, evidence-based and age-appropriate. They also recommend that sex ed include the benefits of delaying sexual intercourse and preventing unintended pregnancies.

But Maryland law does not require sex education curriculum to be medically accurate nor age appropriate. Maryland law also was changed to discourage parental involvement by denying parental consent for children to participate in sex ed programs and only permit parents to “opt out” of participation –IF they are notified by the school at all.

When proposed changes in Maryland law related to the content of the Maryland Health Education Framework repeatedly failed due to public outcry, the Maryland General Assembly unethically pushed through the bill by denying Maryland citizens their Constitutionally-guaranteed rights to freedom of speech, due process, equal protection and right to redress by denying a public hearing on the bill. The fact that a previous bill was heard and failed in a previous session, does not justify denying citizens their right to be heard on a new bill introduced in a subsequent session.

### **Maryland Department of Health Subjects Children to Predatory Practices**

The State of Maryland is derelict in its duty to provide a safe learning environment for school children. Instead, the state has undermined parental rights and given abortion-invested activists unfettered access to school children using taxpayers dollars to promote radical sexual indoctrination and abortion activism in our schools.

The Maryland Department of Education works under the guidance of the Maryland Department of Health in developing school-based reproductive health curriculum and programs. The Maryland Department of Health has demonstrated strong abortion bias, by routinely contracting with abortion providers including **Planned Parenthood** and associated organizations like the **National Women’s Law Center** and **Advocates for Youth** to develop school policy and training programs, while excluding the participation of any organization that does not promote or perform abortion.

As a rule, the State denies any contracts or memoranda of understanding to reproductive health providers who do not commit or refer women for elective abortions. The State has adopted an arbitrary and medically inaccurate definition of “comprehensive reproductive care” which requires participation in elective abortion practices to qualify for public funding.

The ongoing contractual relationship between the Maryland Department of Health, and the Maryland Department of Education with organizations that profit from abortion, including Planned Parenthood, the National Women’s Law Center and Advocates for Youth, is a conflict of interest that allows the predatory abortion industry to target children in Maryland schools.

## **Predatory Abortion Practices in Maryland Schools**

Current and former Planned Parenthood employees have reported that Planned Parenthood and their network of abortion supporters, use sex education, family planning programming and adoption referrals as “catchment systems” to gain access to pregnant women and girls in order to increase their abortion profits.

In their 2020 Annual Report, Planned Parenthood reports that it is a \$2 billion abortion industry that continues to increase its market share in abortion while their prenatal care, family planning and adoption referral services are minimal and continue to decline.

Both Planned Parenthood and Advocates for Youth have reported revenues received from providing training in Maryland public schools.

Advocates for Youth are funded by Planned Parenthood and public tax dollars. As part of their sexuality education curriculum beginning in kindergarten, Advocates for Youth promotes gender fluidity, radical sexuality, puberty blockers, and global access to abortion for minor children including the exclusion of all parental rights in their minor children’s reproductive healthcare decisions. Advocates for Youth recently launched a youth initiative to defund the police and invest instead in “reproductive justice” through sex education.

The Maryland Department of Health has empowered Advocates for Youth by including them in the development of standards for **Maryland School-Based Health Centers (SBHC’s)**. Maryland SBHC’s already operate outside parental consent by distributing and implanting birth control, subjecting minor children to abortion counseling and referral, and in some cases providing or coordinating transportation to abortion clinics during the school day with approved medical absences – *all without parental knowledge or consent*.

The Maryland Department of Health delegates the task of managing SBHC’s to the Maryland Council on the Advancement of School Based Health Centers. The Council enters into partnerships with a variety of **third party stakeholders**. The statute requires membership of the Council to include the President and three designated representatives of the Maryland Assembly on School Based Health Care, who is represented in Annapolis by Planned Parenthood lobbyist, Robyn Elliott. Delegate Bonnie Cullison of Montgomery County, who sponsored the bill to create the Council and several bills related to SBHC’s serves as an ex officio member of the Council. There is no pro-life representation on the Council.

## **National Women’s Law Center Invested in Abortion**

The National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) promotes abortion in Maryland schools. The NWLC also manages the **Abortion Access Legal Defense Fund** funding litigation for abortion providers and organizations, including shielding abortionists from the law.

As of January 26, 2026, the **National Women’s Law Center (NWLC)** materials—specifically the "**Let Her Learn**" and "**Stopping School Pushout**" reports—serve as the primary ideological and legal foundation for Maryland’s mandatory training for school personnel.

While Maryland does not typically provide direct, unrestricted state grants to the NWLC (which is a national 501(c)(3) based in DC), it "funds" the implementation of their materials through the procurement of training services and the adoption of their specific policy frameworks.

The NWLC is a **\$41 million organization** (as of FY 2024/2025) that primarily receives funding from massive private foundations (e.g., **Ford Foundation, JPB Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation**). However, Maryland state funds are connected to them in three specific ways:

- **Indirect Training Fees:** When local school boards hire consulting firms or specialized legal trainers to conduct Title IX workshops, those trainers frequently use **NWLC-licensed toolkits**. A portion of the professional development budget in Maryland counties is effectively paying for the dissemination of this intellectual property.
- **Expert Witness and Policy Consulting:** The Maryland General Assembly and MSDE utilize NWLC staff as "unpaid" expert witnesses. While they are not paid a "salary" by Maryland, their presence in Annapolis is funded by their national donor base to ensure Maryland laws mirror NWLC's model policies.
- **Legal Defense Fund:** The NWLC manages the **Abortion Access Legal Defense Fund**. While separate from high school training, this fund is often a secondary resource for the same "Benefit Navigators" in schools who are being trained under the same legislative umbrella.

### **Parental Notice and Consent Provides Better Outcomes for Minor Children.**

Parents also must know that Maryland law recognizes the natural and legal right of parents to provide consent to their minor child’s medical care with one exception – abortion. While state law requires parental notice for abortion procedures, the state has empowered the person profiting from the abortion to waive that requirement. The influence of the abortion industry in developing school policy and curriculum has degraded the role of parents in their children’s healthcare decisions. Furthermore, the lack of parental notification puts children at greater risk of undiagnosed and untreated abortion complications and enables abortion providers to evade liability for failure to report child abuse, sexual assault and sex trafficking. We know that

### **No Public Subsidies to Billion Dollar Abortion Industry**

A recent Marist poll showed that 83% of Americans polled favor laws that protect both the lives of women and unborn children, and that 54% oppose the use of tax dollars to pay for abortion. Taxpayers should not be forced to fund elective abortions, which make up the vast majority of abortions performed in Maryland. *Public funds instead should be prioritized to fund legitimate health and family planning services which have the objective of saving the lives of both mother and children.*

## **Parental Notice and Consent Provides Better Outcomes for Minor Children**

State and Federal law recognize the natural and legal right of parents to provide consent to their minor child's medical care. The State of Maryland, through the Department of Education has been entrusted by parents with the academic instruction of Maryland children. The state has far exceeded its limited authority to act in place of the parents during the school day, particularly in the matter of student health.

The influence of the abortion industry in developing school policy and curriculum has degraded the role of parents in their children's healthcare decisions. Parents no longer have the opportunity to "opt in" to sex education for our children, but may only "opt out" if we are made aware at all. In some school jurisdictions, parents were being denied the right to opt out their children and were forced to seek judicial relief.

Minor girls can give consent to abortion at the age of 16. Children may consent to behavioral health services, which may include referral to abortion providers or puberty blocking drugs and counseling, as young as 12. The lack of parental notification puts children at greater risk of undiagnosed and untreated medical complications and enables predatory providers to evade liability for failure to report child abuse, sexual assault and sex trafficking.

## **CONCLUSION**

The state must put public health before politics and ensure our schoolchildren are guarded against abortion coercion and related inappropriate and inaccurate education. Because of the correlation between the abortion industry and sex trafficking, the State cannot entrust parties invested in abortion with the instruction of Maryland schoolchildren regarding reproductive health and the related the risks of sex trafficking.

For this reason we urge the Committee to amend this bill to exclude participation by abortion organizations and promoters in developing or implementing curricula and programs on the issue of sex trafficking. Reliable alternatives are available and should be prioritized.

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