

**TO:** House Ways & Means Committee

**BILL:** House Bill 0355 - Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

**DATE:** February 11, 2026

**POSITION:** Oppose

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **HB 355**, which would require Maryland's Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and non-public schools that receive textbook and technology grants to incorporate instructional materials for students in grades 6 through 8 that promote the awareness of human and sex trafficking in their health education curriculum.

The State Board and MSDE do not oppose this legislation on the merits of the identified curricular content, but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would be duplicative of current regulatory requirements and would run counter to the process entrusted to the State Board, MSDE, and LEAs. This position is consistent with our adopted legislative platform, which opposes statutory mandates on curriculum.

The State Board and MSDE have a structured and collaborative process for reviewing, revising, and adopting standards, frameworks, and curricular resources, which was reaffirmed on January 23, 2024. This process ensures that all curriculum updates are age-appropriate, scientifically based, medically accurate, and data-driven, and developed in collaboration between the State Board, MSDE, the Maryland Department of Health, LEAs, and community members through the Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee (SFVC).

As part of this process, the Comprehensive Health Education SFVC began its review of Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.04.18.02 and the Comprehensive Health Education Framework in July 2024. Draft revisions were [published](#) in November 2025 and are currently open for public comment, with adoption tentatively scheduled for the State Board's February 24, 2026, meeting.

**HB 355** would unnecessarily disrupt this ongoing work, creating redundancies and potentially delaying timely updates. Moreover, the existing and proposed Comprehensive Health Education Framework—aligned with the National Health Education Standards—already addresses age-appropriate, scientifically based, medically accurate, and data-driven instruction on critical topics such as sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking.

Compliance with these requirements is further ensured through COMAR 13A.04.18.02, which mandates that local superintendents certify that health education instruction meets, at a minimum, the standards set forth in the Comprehensive Health Education Framework.

The State Board and MSDE respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 355**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov) for any additional information.