



**HB0355 – EDUCATION – SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION
PROGRAM – HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING**

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WAYS AND MEANS

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB0355 – Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking**. This bill amends the requirements that the State Board of Education and each nonpublic school develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault to also include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

Maryland schools provide their students with a comprehensive prekindergarten – 12 health education curriculum that focuses on a student’s development of protective life skills and promotes health and wellbeing. As part of this comprehensive health education curriculum, AACPS students are educated in Family Life and Human Sexuality as well as Safety and Violence Prevention. Students participate in age-appropriate instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. This instruction includes age-appropriate education on human trafficking.

While this legislation is well-intentioned, AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public school curriculum or assessments. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and local boards of education, the same entities charged with researching, investigating, and evaluating both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

AACPS is committed to an ongoing and thorough review of curricula and materials of instruction to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are promoted and evident. AACPS has a committee that reviews curriculum and materials for instruction. Representatives from all stakeholder groups including parents/guardians, teachers, and students are included in the review process. Again, AACPS’s opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching a particular subject matter, but rather the school system’s opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of one concept of content.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB0355.