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**By: Delegate Beck**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 1997

Assigned to: Ways and Means

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Parents and Teachers of Maryland School Children - Bill of Rights**

3 FOR the purpose of adopting a Bill of Rights for Parents and Teachers of Maryland  
4 School Children; and recognizing the importance of the parent as the most  
5 significant advocate for the well-being and successful education of their children.

6 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland mandates regular school attendance for all  
7 children from age 5 to age 16; and

8 WHEREAS, A large amount of federal, State, and county funding resources are  
9 spent on the Maryland State Educational System; and

10 WHEREAS, A large, bureaucratic system of public educational supervision has  
11 evolved at the State and local levels; and

12 WHEREAS, The formal learning process takes place in the classroom and the  
13 success or failure of education is almost exclusively the result of the efforts of the  
14 classroom teacher and the student with strong parental involvement; and

15 WHEREAS, The parent has unique and legal responsibility for the development of  
16 his or her children; now, therefore, be it

17 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND**, That the  
18 below listed Bill of Rights for Parents and Teachers of Maryland School Children is  
19 adopted in order to permit parents to rapidly and effectively resolve school situations  
20 which may adversely affect the children for whom they bear proactive responsibility; and  
21 be it further

22 **RESOLVED**, That this Bill of Rights serve as general guidance to the various levels  
23 of State educational bureaucracy in providing the most responsive and highest quality  
24 learning environment possible; and be it further

25 **RESOLVED**, That the Bill of Rights contain the following assurances for parents  
26 and teachers:

27 (1) The State will provide a high-quality educational program for the eligible  
28 children of Maryland. This program will focus on those basic academic skills that will  
29 make our students self-sufficient, productive citizens, and provide them with the  
30 knowledge necessary to be readily employable in today's modern marketplace.

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1 (2) Upon graduation, each student will have earned a diploma which indicates  
2 that the student has met all standard requirements for education in the State of  
3 Maryland. For those who have taken a pre-college curriculum, their graduation will  
4 assure that no remedial study work is required before proceeding into or during  
5 baccalaureate studies.

6 (3) At all academic levels, students will be assessed impartially on the basis of  
7 equal academic standards and evaluations. Whenever possible, teachers should establish  
8 clear and specific criteria for achieving certain levels of academic success, and students  
9 and their families, as well as school administrators, should respect the authority of the  
10 teacher in judging students' work against those established criteria. Students should not  
11 be permitted to continue to the next grade level until they have met the requirements of  
12 their current grade level.

13 (4) Student difficulties are to be reconciled as rapidly as possible. It is hoped that  
14 an understanding teacher and a little parental patience will permit resolution of problems  
15 at the lowest level possible within a reasonable time line. When the scope of the problem  
16 forces higher level attention, the appropriate officials of the State education system will  
17 settle the dispute with all possible speed.

18 (5) Where students are not progressing as well as the parent might hope, parents  
19 may ask for a change of teachers or even schools if parents have reasonable expectations  
20 that these changes may be helpful. In particular, students attending schools which rank in  
21 the lower third of their county should receive every consideration for a transfer based on  
22 parental request.

23 (6) It is understood that, on occasion, prescribed course work may conflict with  
24 the religious beliefs or emotional status of individual students. Individual schools should  
25 be allowed to recognize these conditions and rapidly grant alternatives to students based  
26 on parental requests. Parents must understand, however, that the failure to complete the  
27 course work or alternative may be noted in their student's graduation record.

28 (7) Effective classroom teachers are the foundation of a successful education  
29 process. Quality teachers should be allowed a degree of latitude in teaching techniques  
30 and the best teachers should be rewarded for the exceptional overall results of their  
31 students. While staff, administrators, and support personnel serve important functions,  
32 these are always secondary to the role of the teacher.

33 (8) Teachers hold a position of prestige and authority which is inherent in the  
34 function they perform. Their rightful authority must be respected by school officials as  
35 well as by students and parents. Parents should understand that student respect for the  
36 teacher is vital to the education process.

37 (9) A successful classroom requires a controlled, serious, and positive learning  
38 environment. The students and the teacher must be able to function without threat and/or  
39 disruption. Any student who repetitively impedes in any way the normal protocol of the  
40 classroom should be removed from the class and not permitted to return until the  
41 student's parents have taken action to ensure that no further occurrences of belligerent  
42 behavior will occur. The sanctity of the classroom is paramount.

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1 (10) Parents should be apprised of the grade their children achieve in every major  
2 examination in which they participate, including the State mandated Maryland School  
3 Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). The examination process should be limited  
4 as much as possible to assessing the progress of individual students in achieving  
5 prescribed goals of education. However, when examinations are conducted for reasons  
6 other than the evaluation of student achievement, parents must be offered a complete  
7 explanation of the purpose of the examination as well as the intended utilization of the  
8 test results.

9 (11) Private and parochial schools are a vital adjunct to the public system, offering  
10 families high-quality educational alternatives, often at a lower per student cost than  
11 public schools. Additionally, the operation of these schools provides significant savings in  
12 taxpayer funding for per pupil and school construction costs. Accordingly, quality private  
13 and parochial schooling should be encouraged and supported whenever possible. Pilot  
14 programs to test school choice options should be considered as a means of providing  
15 healthy competition to the public schools, and as a viable solution to temporary problems  
16 with public school overcrowding or to individual student academic problems.

17 (12) The charter school concept mandates school policy development and  
18 operation at the local level. Charter schools can provide greater parental involvement,  
19 better flexibility in teaching techniques, and should over time focus a greater percentage  
20 of school funding into the classroom.

21 (13) A variety of legal opinions note that responsibility for the upbringing of  
22 children rests with the parent, not the State. Therefore, while the State can mandate  
23 school attendance for children, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the child  
24 receives a proper and adequate education. Since parents pay for the school system and  
25 bear the responsibility for their children's success, every effort must be made by the  
26 school system to meet the individual needs of the students and to support the desires of  
27 the parents; and be it further

28 **RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of  
29 Legislative Reference to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland; the  
30 State Superintendent of Schools, Nancy S. Grasmick, and the Assistant State  
31 Superintendent for School and Community Outreach, Ronald A. Peiffer, Maryland State  
32 Education Building, 200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; the board of  
33 education and superintendent of schools of each county of Maryland: Allegany County  
34 Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 108 Washington Street, Cumberland,  
35 MD 21502; Anne Arundel County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools,  
36 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401; Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
37 and Superintendent of Schools, 200 East North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21202; Baltimore  
38 County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 6901 North Charles Street,  
39 Towson, MD 21204; Calvert County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools,  
40 1305 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678; Caroline County Board of  
41 Education and Superintendent of Schools, 112 Market Street, Denton, MD 21629; Carroll  
42 County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Courthouse Annex, 55 North  
43 Court Street, Westminster, MD 21157; Cecil County Board of Education and  
44 Superintendent of Schools, Booth Street Center, 201 Booth Street, Elkton, MD 21921;  
45 Charles County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box D, 5980  
46 Radio Station Road, La Plata, MD 20646; Dorchester County Board of Education and

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1 Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box 619, 700 Glasgow Street, Cambridge, MD 21613;  
2 Frederick County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 115 East Church  
3 Street, Frederick, MD 21701; Garrett County Board of Education and Superintendent of  
4 Schools, P.O. Box 59, 40 South Fourth Street, Oakland, MD 21550; Harford County  
5 Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 45 East Gordon Street, Bel Air, MD  
6 21014; Howard County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 10910 Route  
7 108, Ellicott City, MD 21043; Kent County Board of Education and Superintendent of  
8 Schools, 215 Washington Avenue, Chestertown, MD 21620; Montgomery County Board  
9 of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD  
10 20850; Prince George's County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 14201  
11 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772; Queen Anne's County Board of Education  
12 and Superintendent of Schools, 202 Chesterfield Avenue, Centreville, MD 21617; St.  
13 Mary's County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box 641,  
14 Governmental Center, Route 245, Leonardtown, MD 20650; Somerset County Board of  
15 Education and Superintendent of Schools, 30411 Mt. Vernon Road, Princess Anne, MD  
16 21853; Talbot County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box 1029,  
17 8 North West Street, Easton, MD 21601; Washington County Board of Education and  
18 Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box 730, 820 Commonwealth Avenue, Hagerstown, MD  
19 21741; Wicomico County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, P.O. Box  
20 1538, 101 Long Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21802; and Worcester County Board of Education  
21 and Superintendent of Schools, 6270 Worcester Highway, Newark, MD 21841.