

---

By: **Senators Haines, Jacobs, Harris, McCabe, Madden, Stoltzfus, Hooper, Munson, Ferguson, Colburn, and Hafer**  
 Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2000  
 Assigned to: Economic and Environmental Affairs

---

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Public Schools - Character Education**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring a county board of education to establish a certain  
 4 program of character education; requiring a character education program to be  
 5 taught in all public schools; requiring the components of a character education  
 6 program to be developed in cooperation with certain groups; setting forth certain  
 7 character traits that a character education program may include; requiring the  
 8 State Board of Education to take certain actions with regard to character  
 9 education programs; providing that this section shall not be construed to require  
 10 or authorize the indoctrination of students in a religious or political belief; and  
 11 generally relating to character education.

12 BY adding to  
 13 Article - Education  
 14 Section 7-113  
 15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 16 (1999 Replacement Volume)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
 18 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article - Education**

20 7-113.

21 (A) THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO INSTILL IN STUDENTS CIVIC  
 22 VIRTUES AND PERSONAL CHARACTER TRAITS SO AS TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING  
 23 ENVIRONMENT, PROMOTE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, REDUCE DISCIPLINARY  
 24 PROBLEMS, AND DEVELOP CIVIC-MINDED STUDENTS OF HIGH CHARACTER.

25 (B) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM OF CHARACTER  
 26 EDUCATION, WHICH SHALL BE REQUIRED TO BE TAUGHT IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 (C) THE COMPONENTS OF EACH CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM  
2 ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE DEVELOPED IN COOPERATION WITH  
3 STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

4 (D) THE CHARACTER TRAITS TAUGHT IN EACH CHARACTER EDUCATION  
5 PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION MAY INCLUDE:

6 (1) TRUSTWORTHINESS, INCLUDING HONESTY, INTEGRITY, RELIABILITY,  
7 AND LOYALTY;

8 (2) RESPECT, INCLUDING TOLERANCE, COURTESY, AND THE PRECEPTS  
9 OF THE GOLDEN RULE;

10 (3) RESPONSIBILITY, INCLUDING HARD WORK, ECONOMIC  
11 SELF-RELIANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, DILIGENCE, PERSEVERANCE, AND  
12 SELF-CONTROL;

13 (4) FAIRNESS, INCLUDING JUSTICE, CONSEQUENCES OF BAD BEHAVIOR,  
14 PRINCIPLES OF NONDISCRIMINATION, AND FREEDOM FROM PREJUDICE;

15 (5) CARING, INCLUDING KINDNESS, EMPATHY, COMPASSION,  
16 CONSIDERATION, GENEROSITY, AND CHARITY; AND

17 (6) CITIZENSHIP, INCLUDING PATRIOTISM, THE PLEDGE OF  
18 ALLEGIANCE, RESPECT FOR THE AMERICAN FLAG, CONCERN FOR THE COMMON  
19 GOOD, RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY AND THE LAW, AND COMMUNITY-MINDEDNESS.

20 (E) THE STATE BOARD SHALL:

21 (1) ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
22 CONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION;

23 (2) PROVIDE RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE COUNTY  
24 BOARDS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

25 (3) REVIEW AND ANALYZE THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
26 ESTABLISHED BY THE COUNTY BOARDS AND BY JURISDICTIONS IN OTHER STATES;

27 (4) IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND  
28 PRACTICES;

29 (5) DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO THE COUNTY BOARDS REGARDING:

30 (I) EFFECTIVE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND  
31 PRACTICES; AND

32 (II) POTENTIAL FUNDING AND SUPPORT SOURCES FOR CHARACTER  
33 EDUCATION PROGRAMS; AND

1           (6)     AWARD GRANTS TO COUNTY BOARDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
2 INNOVATIVE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS, WITH SUCH FUNDS AS ARE  
3 APPROPRIATED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

4           (F)     THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE OR AUTHORIZE  
5 THE INDOCTRINATION OF STUDENTS IN ANY PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL  
6 BELIEF.

7           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
8 October 1, 2000.