



HB1300/SB1000 - Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Implementation

Presented to the Honorable Anne Kaiser and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,
The Honorable Maggie MacIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,
The Honorable Paul Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
February 17, 2020 12:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a **favorable report on HB1300/SB1000 - Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation.**

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every individual has the freedom to decide to if, when, and how to form their families, and when parenting, to do so in good health, in safety, and in dignity. We all know that a solid education brings opportunities of economic security and realize goals in building one's family. Every Maryland public student has the right to the same rigorous education as their peers. However, there have been too many disparities in the educational outcomes among our youth, and it now time for our state to make the long-term and deep investment to address the many challenges we face with our school systems.

We appreciate that among the factors recognized in this legislation are aspects relating to gender, as discrimination and stereotypes regarding one's gender can affect perceptions about a student's capabilities or career goals. However, it should be made clear that at-risk or at-promise students should include those that identify as LGBTQ+, as well as pregnant and parenting students – groups that appear to be missing in this legislation. It will not be enough to simply offer some wrap-around services to help address the challenges that many students may face in their families or communities, but also in poor school climates where discrimination or harassment significantly affect school attendance and class participation. These students should also not be pushed into alternative schools or into tracks where they are not afforded the same rights to a rigorous education or be college bound. This is especially true for pregnant and parenting students who often find a renewed interest in obtaining high school diplomas, as they have gained a better understanding of how much education is tied to economic security. Our hope is that the accountability strategies identified in this legislation will help reduce ways that schools discriminate against students by choosing to invest resources for some students, but not all, and raise awareness of the intersectionality of discrimination that occurs among youth with multiple identities. We are also appreciative of the investment made in school-health clinics that have become important to students who otherwise would find difficulty in addressing physical and mental health concerns, and engaging in preventative care during their adolescent years.

We are hopeful that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future will bring more schools into compliance with Title IX protections in eliminating discrimination based upon gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or parenting status, and more opportunities for all students to excel. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable report on bills HB1300 and SB100.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

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