



Opposition Statement HB1056/SB827
Nonpublic Schools – Adequate Health Services – Eligibility for Reimbursement

By Laura Bogley, JD
Director of Legislation, Maryland Right to Life

On behalf of our members across the state we respectfully oppose this bill and ask for your unfavorable report. This bill would force Maryland taxpayers to fund the expansion of the abortion industry into private schools. In its current form, the bill offers an inducement to private schools to allow the state to impose school health standards defined by the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Education. This would necessarily include reproductive health standards that are strongly biased by the influence of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), Planned Parenthood and abortion advocates who seek to expand abortion access among youth. By accepting this inducement, private schools will become subject to state and federal law anti-discrimination laws from which they currently may be exempted as religious organizations. They also will be prohibited from charging tuition rates higher than the expenditure per pupil allocated through the county public school system, limiting other services and increasing their dependency on the state.

Sexuality Education - MSDE allows third party providers like Planned Parenthood to create and implement “Reproductive Health” curriculum, policies and services in public schools. **But Maryland law does not require reproductive health education to be medically accurate or age appropriate.** Planned Parenthood’s radical sexuality education program begins in kindergarten and starts with gender identity. Third party providers also contract with county school systems and are paid to train teachers and coaches in sexuality education curriculum and counseling.

Reproductive Health Services - Through the *Maryland Standards for School-Based Health Centers*, MSDE has authorized school clinics to perform “reproductive health” services, including filling prescriptions for birth control, implanting long- acting reproductive control devices (LARCs), providing “comprehensive reproductive health” education and pregnancy options counseling, and providing referrals to additional off-site “reproductive health care” services, without parental knowledge or consent. The state is attempting to reduce standards to implement telehealth in school-based health centers, which would expose school children to great risk through the potential distribution of chemical abortion pills, which are 4 times more dangerous than surgical abortion. Pregnancy is not a disease and abortion is not health care. The fact that 85% of OB-GYNs in a representative national survey do not commit abortions is glaring evidence that abortion is not an essential part of women’s healthcare.

Parental Notice and Consent Provides Better Outcomes for Minor Children - Maryland law recognizes the natural and legal right of parents to provide consent to their minor child’s medical care. But the influence of the abortion industry in developing school policy and curriculum has degraded the role of parents in their children’s healthcare decisions. The state has aggravated the situation by failing to require sex education curriculum to be medically accurate or age appropriate. Because of the influence of the abortion lobby, parents no longer have the opportunity to “opt in” to sex education for our children, but may only “opt out” if we are made aware at all. Furthermore, the lack of parental notification puts children at greater risk of undiagnosed and untreated abortion complications and enables abortion providers to evade liability for failure to report child abuse, sexual assault and sex trafficking.

No Taxpayer Funding to Abortion Network - As a result of the state authorizing and subsidizing the abortion industry to have direct access to our school children, the number of abortions has INCREASED not decreased. In their 2020 annual report Planned Parenthood reports committing an all-time high number of abortions, while their family planning and prenatal services have dramatically declined. Taxpayers should not be forced to expand the access of the abortion industry to private school students.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your unfavorable report on this bill and we recommend that the State of Maryland revise the standards for School-Based Health Centers to eliminate abortion activism in our schools and to prioritize funding for programs that support the health and lives of both mothers and children.