



January 28, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.

Judicial Proceedings Committee

2 East, Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT SB0098 (HB0155) County Boards and Public and Nonpublic
Prekindergarten Programs and Schools – Discrimination – Prohibition

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Invidious discrimination hurts us as a society, it divides people and impedes people from realizing their potential. The government sector in particular has a responsibility to not participate in, or otherwise facilitate, invidious discrimination. There should be no exception for government education policy. This bill requiring all elementary and secondary schools receiving government funding to uphold government non-discrimination standards, with strengthened enforcement procedures, is welcome. The Secular Coalition for Maryland recommends this bill for approval by the General Assembly.

Everyone wants their children to be safe. Too often people who are unlike ourselves are seen as threatening, triggering misdirected fear. Minorities can be vulnerable to negative stereotyping. Some theists deem non-theism to be peculiar, unreasonable, or threatening. They misunderstand non-theism and may associate non-theism with negative behavior. The metaphysical naturalism underlying non-theism is an intellectual conclusion that nontheists (deists, agnostics, atheists) sincerely consider to be more compelling than the competing conclusions.



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Government funding of nonpublic school education too often disregards invidious discrimination against religious belief dissenters such as nontheists. Without this proposed revision to the law it is more likely that some of the government subsidized nonpublic schools will discriminate against nontheists. Our laws should state firmly and clearly: Government's nondiscrimination obligations will not be circumvented by government funding of third parties who discriminate.