



Maryland Alliance for  
Racial Equity in Education

To: Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Shamoyia Gardiner, Maryland Alliance for Race Equity in Education  
Re: Senate Bill 0098: County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools - Discrimination - Prohibition  
Date: January 28, 2021

Position: Support with an Amendment

As Maryland expands early learning opportunities investing tens of millions of dollars into a public / private delivery system we must be reminded of and prevent harm due to discriminatory practices.

As [reported](#) by the Washington Post, recently released Office of Civil Rights data from the U.S. Department of Education on preschool suspension and expulsion revealed significant racial disparities in preschool discipline, with Black children being nearly three times as likely to be suspended from preschool than their White peers.

Black boys make up 18 percent of the male preschool enrollment, but 41 percent of male preschool suspensions, and Black girls make up 19 percent of female preschool enrollment, but account for an astounding 53 percent of female suspensions.

While Maryland has made strides in reducing exclusionary practices in the early grades by passing legislation in 2017, the disparities have not been eliminated. This bill would help to ensure that the protections afforded students in public education are also experienced by publicly funded students in private settings.

All students, regardless of their race, religion, gender identity, parenting status, nationality, sexual orientation, disability status, English proficiency, or any of many other demographic categories, deserve access to high-quality education. All schools, public and nonpublic alike, must provide that access, particularly nonpublic schools which receive public funds and are responsible for ushering our youngest learners into their educational careers.

SB0098 could be improved by inserting the word "suspending" in between the words "of" and "expelling" on line 19. We encourage consideration of this amendment and with this clarity included MAREE urges a favorable report on this bill.

**NAACP // ACLU Maryland // Greater Baltimore Urban League // CASA // Strong Schools MD //  
Black and Brown Coalition of Montgomery County // BEE // ACY // 1977-II Action Group //  
Attendance Works // Business Leaders for Education Maryland // Family League Baltimore // Urban  
Teachers // Caucus of African American Leaders // Baltimore Corps // Ed Trust // Identity**