



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

HB 11 - Public Schools - African American History - Development of Content Standards and
Implementation

Ways and Means Committee
1/27/2021
SUPPORT

Good afternoon, my name is Finley Slenker and I am 13 years old, attend Annapolis Middle School and today I am representing the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland in Support of HB 11.

Growing up I learned about our great and brave founding fathers who built our country from the ground up. We were of course taught about slavery and how awfully treated African Americans were. We also learned about the underground railroad, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other great African Americans. We have an entire month dedicated to honoring these people and teaching about African American history, which is great but see as there are 11 other months in a year where we are taught the same things we have been taught for years on end. One month seems a little small. There are things we are taught that played a major part in our history but are only talked about in school for a few years in your elementary school career; such as the Underground Railroad which I learned about how it was used for escaping enslaved people who needed safe houses. Things that are not talked about in school that could be handled in more depth are how people would tie green and red ribbons on lawn jockey statues indicating safety and danger.

Schools could also teach about how Harriet Tubman was the first woman to lead a major military operation. Tubman and her African American soldiers rescued more than 700 slaves in the Combahee Ferry Raid during the Civil War!

Now, I've told you what should be included in our education but not why. You can ask anyone in my grade when the Black Lives Matter movement started and they would say last year or not know at all. Most of what kids know about Black History is from what they read online or popular apps like Tik Tok, which is not always accurate. That is why we should be learning these things in school. We should be learning this along with the Founding Fathers or Christopher Columbus who discovered The Dominican Republic and said he found a continent.

Lack of knowledge on important things like Black History can result in ignorance and racism which is what has been happening even before the United States was founded. It all starts with what you have been told your whole life. With your help, we can start on the next step of a long and bumpy road of fixing the centuries of racism and discrimination.

Please support HB11.