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## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

**Bill: HB 0140 Commission on History, Culture, & Civics in Education**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Michèle Schlehofer, Legislative Chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

### **SALISBURY PFLAG SUPPORTS COMISSION on HISTORY, CULTURE, & CIVICS in EDUACATION**

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of HB 0140 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

HB 0140 would provide access to education that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) people, history, culture, and perspectives. LGBTQ+ youth are unlikely to be taught these topics at home.

According to research, less than 20% of high school students are taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events at school. And, roughly the same percentage of youth learn about LGBTQ+ people in a *negative* way.

Learning about LGBTQ+ history and people is beneficial for all students, providing deeper contextual information. For instance, Eleanor Roosevelt's letter correspondence with journalist Lorena Hickok is easier to interpret if aware that the two had a romantic relationship. Integrating LGBTQ+ history into existing curricula is not complicated, as many historical LGBTQ+ figures are already taught in school.

LGBTQ+ students, in particular, are likely to benefit from this type of education. Research finds LGBTQ+ inclusive education improves school climate and LGBTQ+ students who attend schools with inclusive curricula report their school climate as more supportive and as safer, experience less harassment, and have greater self-esteem. These factors subsequently reduce the likelihood that students will skip school, and increase their GPA and likelihood of going to college.

PFLAG Salisbury supports HB 0140 and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.