



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 462 | House Bill 47: Public Schools – Expanded American History – Development of Content Standards and Implementation

My name is Jacob Barron and I'm a member of the Montgomery County, Maryland, Chapter of the National Organization for Women. I offer this testimony on behalf of MCMDNOW and myself personally in support of Maryland Senate Bill 462, which would expand the State's education curriculum to include the history of African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, Women and other Groups as determined by the State Board.

In addition to being a NOW member, a resident of Montgomery County and a product of Maryland public schools myself, I'm also the father of two young children, a boy and a girl. My son will be entering the public school system later this year and his immediate educational future is the primary reason why I support this bill.

I joined my local chapter of NOW last year because I was disturbed by the number of different social and political developments that struck at the dignity of women and their right to independence and self-determination. These are things I've always taken for granted, and have never been forced to contemplate losing, given my position as a cisgender heterosexual White male.

I want my son and daughter to grow up aware of these challenges—the historical threats women have always faced to their safety, agency and bodily autonomy—and suitably awed by the efforts and successes of women to overcome them and continue to push this country toward a more equitable future.

That's why I support this bill, not merely for its inclusion of women as one of the groups that should receive more attention from the state's educational curriculum, but for its inclusion of all the marginalized groups who have made enormous contributions to the cause of American progress. The more different experiences and perspectives my children can be exposed to, the more likely they will grow up to be allies and advocates for that same cause—progress, not just for groups to which they belong, but for every group.

As I see it, the ultimate goal of Senate Bill 462 is to help build a new generation of Marylanders who are committed to the values of diversity, equity and community—future citizens who see themselves as one in the part of a greater whole, and who use their awareness of other people's experiences to move through society more thoughtfully and more generously than if they had been taught otherwise.

In the ongoing project of increasing equity and ending discrimination, I can think of no better place to start than in the classroom. That's why my NOW chapter and I support Senate Bill 462.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, and we ask you to vote in support of this bill.

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