



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of Senate Bill 852
–Education -County Boards of Education -Health Educator Position-
Before the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
On March 8, 2022**

**Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the
Committee:**

Senate Bill 852 seeks to establish a health educator leadership position to oversee the implementation of a comprehensive, skills-based health education. It is consistent with previous legislation passed by the General Assembly to ensure that the state’s health curriculum includes boundary awareness, consent, and prevention of sexual and relational abuse. The bill would require the oversight needed to ensure that the health curriculum is monitored and evaluated by a professional with expertise in the health education field.

According to the Maryland State Department of Education, only 11 of 24 school systems in the state have a health education leader who has a certification in health education. This makes little sense. Health education addresses nuanced and complex topics such as violence prevention, mental and emotional health, family life, human sexuality, substance use prevention, disease prevention, and healthy eating. Our teachers, who are asked to do a herculean job, need the support

of an expert on how to teach health education safely, effectively, and appropriately.

It is important that we find ways to support our children as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. Health education provides them with the skills and habits they need to be productive, thriving adults. The data shows that [students who receive comprehensive health education make safer, more informed and less destructive choices](#); they eat healthier, have better quality sleep, and are more physically active. Further still, these children tend to be stronger communicators; and they are more aware of behaviors that support their mental and emotional health, including identifying and seeking help from trusted adults. In order for comprehensive health education to be impactful, a professional needs to monitor and evaluate it for success, which is what this bill will help ensure.

Given this, I ask the committee to give a favorable report on Senate Bill 852.

Sincerely,



Jill P. Carter