



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401
Email: eee437@comcast.net

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairman
and Members of the Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: **HB 0495** – Student Organized Peaceful Demonstrations – **OPPOSED**

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women opposes HB 0495, which would authorize student-organized peaceful demonstrations during school hours on school property or on school buses.

Allowing these activities during school hours would result in all students losing valuable classroom time. Allowing students to conduct demonstrations on school buses is irresponsible and dangerous for both students and the bus driver.

The Vision Statement of the Maryland State Board of Education states best what our schools should be concentrating on:

Ensure all students have access to a world class educational system that prepares them to graduate ready for post-secondary learning, rewarding work, and success in society and life.

Parents send their children to school for that purpose, not to organize and participate in political demonstrations on school time. Nothing is stopping students from political advocacy or participating in demonstrations outside of school hours. That's what happens in real life – advocacy on your own time.

Data confirms that too many students are performing below grade-level in reading, mathematics, and science. The last thing students need is to be distracted from their academic studies to organize and participate in demonstrations or have classroom time supplanted by political demonstrations.

Already overburdened teachers and administrators will have to take time from their academic planning to review, approve and supervise demonstrations. How does one decide what is acceptable and what is not? How do you ensure fairness? Who will be the arbiter of political views?

Please give HB 495 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman