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March 1, 2022

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly

Re: *House Bill 832*

Dear Chairperson Atterbeary, Honorable Members of the Committee:

By way of introduction, HSLDA is a national nonprofit organization committed to preserving homeschool freedom and supporting homeschool families. With more than 100,000 member families, we are the world's largest homeschool advocacy organization. We have more than 1,500 member families in Maryland.

HSLDA opposes H.B. 832 for three primary reasons: it is unnecessary, it would limit the voices of grassroots homeschooling parents and advocates, and it technically fails to accomplish its well-meaning purpose to provide a voice to all homeschoolers.

The creation of a homeschool advisory council is unnecessary to serve the needs of the homeschooling community.

Homeschooling is a grassroots movement consisting of loving parents and small support organizations committed to educating children at home and supporting and equipping other homeschooling families. Homeschooling has thrived over the past several decades without government assistance. Rather than creating a council within the Maryland Department of Education to advise the Department on homeschooling matters, HSLDA urges the General Assembly to respect the *liberty* of the homeschooling community.



The creation of a homeschool advisory council limits the voices of grassroots homeschooling parents and advocates.

The creation of an official advisory council will create an official voice for the homeschooling community, making it easier for the Department to mute the voices of grassroots homeschooling parents and advocates. While the bill is intended to create a voice for homeschooling within the department, it is flawed in design because it limits the number of voices to which the Department will turn for input and guidance. Because the council is self-perpetuating, it is structurally unable to ensure the wishes of homeschoolers are properly respected. Over time, this council may threaten the liberty that the homeschooling community cherishes and relies upon today.

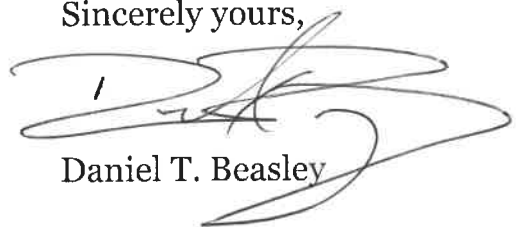
The creation of a homeschool advisory council fails to advance its intended purpose.

While H.B. 832 is designed to benefit homeschooling families, many homeschooling families oppose its creation. Most homeschooling families I have heard from only learned of the proposal *after* it was formally introduced in the General Assembly. To advance the interests of the entire homeschooling community, more time and input is needed to ensure the proposal will, in fact, accomplish its well-intended purpose. Passing a proposal to benefit homeschooling families over the objection of homeschooling families will not effectively amplify the voice of homeschoolers.

For these reasons, please oppose H.B. 832.

Thank you for your service to Maryland citizens.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel T. Beasley', is written over a large, stylized scribble or flourish.

Daniel T. Beasley

DTB/gb