



March 8, 2022

**House Bill 1256 Education – Discriminatory Concepts in Instruction – Prohibition  
(Ending Discrimination in Public Education Act of 2022)**

**Position: IN OPPOSITION**

Dear Chairperson Atterbeary; Vice Chairperson Washington and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

On behalf of the members and supporters of the Maryland State Bar Association-Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (MSBA-DEI),<sup>1</sup> MSBA-DEI requests that this Committee issue an unfavorable report on HB 1256. The MSBA-DEI is an association of Maryland lawyers who serve as advocates and resources for diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal community. Through various partnerships and programs, the MSBA-DEI committee instructs about the benefits of diversity and advocates for greater participation of traditionally underrepresented groups in legal fields.

The MSBA-DEI expresses its opposition to HB 1256 because the bill works to silence discussions about race and racism by prohibiting instruction or discussion that causes “discomfort” Consequently, HB 1256 suppresses the teachings of race and racism. Although conversations about race and racism may be challenging or uncomfortable, the alternative is ruinous to the growth of a just and equitable society.

Students, especially black, indigenous, people of color, know that race plays a significant role in perception, treatment and the ease or lack thereof with which one navigates life in Maryland, the United States and the world. Race is an extremely important topic of inquiry for school age children whose identities are being formed. Avoiding discussions about race and racism in the classroom is frighteningly harmful as these teachings will be left to social media platforms such as TikTok or Instagram. Students learn best in a nurturing environment when they are able to actively grapple complex ideas, challenge their own assumptions or seek more information from a knowledgeable source. Educators are tasked with providing a nurturing, learning environment for children. Educators must teach students how to communicate about challenging topics and cultivate discussion skills into school curriculum.

Furthermore, it is imperative that we raise future voters who will have a well-rounded understanding of history. HB 1256 effectively promotes the continued predominance of curriculum that excludes the history and lived experiences of Americans who are black, indigenous, and people of color. HB 1256 proposes silence. Silence discounts the students’ experiences and condones ignorance. The chilling effect of HB 1256 on students who are black, indigenous, and people of color is that they are left unseen and unheard. All history must be taught. MSBA-DEI pushes for equity in schools and teaching which is inclusive regardless of

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<sup>1</sup> The active members of the Judiciary who are members and supporters of the MSBA-DEI Committee take no part in this Statement.



any “discomfort”. Discomfort promotes growth by permitting an opportunity for courage, awareness and understanding to enter the space, in this instance the classroom.

**For these reasons, the Maryland State Bar Association-Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (MSBA-DEI) urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 1256.**

Submitted by: Maryland State Bar Association-Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (*Note: Pursuant to the Maryland Code of Judicial Conduct, no member of the Maryland Judiciary participated in or contributed to the above statements*).

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