
HB 495 TESTIMONY: Endorsements



MARYLAND STUDENT COALITION

2022 Legislative Session

About Our Organization:

The Maryland Student Coalition (MSC) is an advocacy group comprised of secondary and post secondary school students working together to create and advocate for effective and equitable education policy.

MSC Leadership:

Jonathon T. DiPietro
Director

Hunter P. Craig
Deputy Director

Christopher D. Lidard
Associate Director

Lauren A. Raskin
Associate Director

Vinay K. Khosla
Associate Director

MSC Senior Associates:

Olivia Le (Anne Arundel County)
Maja Durkovic (Baltimore County)
Kyle Abosch (Cecil County)
Harshia Bhagat (Howard County)
Neha Dinesh (Howard County)
Noah Hanssen (Howard County)
Julia Littlefield (Howard County)
Chikamara Obioha (Howard County)
Sidd Shah (Howard County)
Elani Bui (Montgomery County)SB116
Senior Associates

marylandstudents.org

About this Document:

This document is a compilation of testimony collected and presented on the previously introduced 2021 version of the same bill, House Bill 753. This package contains relevant testimonials in favor of the current iteration of the Student Demonstrations Initiative, House Bill 495.

Additional questions can be directed to marylandstudentcoalition@gmail.com or you can visit our website at marylandstudents.org.

Testimony Package: 'B'

**Elected Officials
and
Organizations**

Maryland Student Coalition

PACKAGE ‘B’

Contents:

Number	Name	Description
<i>1</i>	Howard County Council	A joint letter from several members of the Howard County Council.
<i>2</i>	Maryland SMOB Coalition	A joint letter from several current serving student members (or equivalent) of boards of education.
<i>3</i>	MYAC Support	The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (“MYAC”) has passed a stance to officially support this initiative.
<i>4</i>	HCASC Stance	The Howard County Association of Student Councils (“HCASC”) has passed a stance to officially support this initiative.
<i>5</i>	MCR Resolution	The Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association (“MCR”) has passed a stance to officially support this initiative.

*Please Note: Additional Organizations have supported this initiative, but did not submit written testimony in time to be filed with this package.

Please inquire for further information by contacting: jonathon.dipietro1@gmail.com



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COUNCILMEMBERS

Liz Walsh
District 1

Christiana Rigby
District 3

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0753

Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

February 10, 2021

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee. We are writing today to express our **support for HB0753**, legislation introduced by Delegate Ebersole to protect the rights of students to peacefully demonstrate in schools.

In recent years, students across Maryland have organized and led peaceful demonstrations at school to protest gun violence, police brutality, and racism. While many of these demonstrations have been permitted in Maryland school districts, some students have faced threats of disciplinary action for exercising their right to speech and peaceful protest. This bill would ensure that all Maryland students are protected from disciplinary action if they choose to participate in peaceful, organized protests on school campuses.

We have met with several student leaders and activists in Howard County who have highlighted the importance of protecting this right for students in schools. As we continue to witness incredible leadership and courage from young people in our community who are standing up for social justice and change, this legislation makes important strides in protecting students' right to speech and peaceful demonstration.

Our school systems should be empowering students to be civically engaged and educating young people on how to use their agency for change. HB0753 will support those goals and support our students. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. We respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Liz Walsh in blue ink.

Liz Walsh
Councilmember, District 1

Handwritten signature of Christiana Rigby in blue ink.

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember, District 3

Monday, February 8, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: In Favor of HB0753 Sponsored by Delegate Eric Ebersole

Students of Maryland's Boards of Education

Dear Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

We, the students of Maryland's Boards of Education, are in favor of HB0753. Our commitment to student voice and advocacy led us to run for our positions, and HB0753 seeks to help uplift and protect every student in their advocacy.

If passed, this bill would allow universal rights for students to demonstrate on school grounds without fear of consequence, elevates student voices, recognizes the importance of peaceful demonstration, and serves an important educational experience; civic responsibility.

We are at a time in history when young people are increasingly involved in movements to bring about change, be it on issues of racial justice or the climate. And why shouldn't we be – we are demanding change for our own future; we are holding ourselves and our elected leaders accountable to uphold our responsibilities to future generations.

Students peacefully protesting for what they believe in is nothing new. It was famously four college students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University who in 1960 started the sit-in movement when they sat at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Their seemingly simple protest and show of great courage is arguably one of the most important events of the Civil Rights movement. Similarly, the Cambridge movement over on our Eastern Shore here in Maryland was led by students who, like the Greensboro Four, conducted sit-ins and other peaceful protests against segregation.

Most of us had just entered high school when the entire country watched the Parkland Massacre occur, and what resulted was one of the most prominent examples of youth protest and advocacy to date: the March for Our Lives movement. Many of us helped respectfully and responsibly demonstrate in solidarity with fellow students across the nation. Actions like these must be protected, and students should not fear repercussions for their advocacy. The right to non-violent protest and assembly is one of the fundamental civil liberties of American democracy, and students should be accorded this right without fear of retribution.

For the reasons stated above, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 0753.

Signed in solidarity,

Drake Smith
Student Member
Anne Arundel County Board of Education

Kyree' M. Sykes
Student Commissioner
Baltimore City Board of School
Commissioners

Devanshi Mistry
Student Representative
Carroll County Board of Education

Ian Herd
Student Member
Charles County Board of Education

Jarrett M. Miller
Student Member
Garrett County Board of Education

Phoebe Bailey
Student Member
Harford County Board of Education

Zachary Koung
Student Member
Howard County Board of Education

Rachel Jones
Student Member
Kent County Board of Education

Jason T. Wu
Student Member
Maryland State Board of Education

Ninah Jackson
Student Member
Prince George's County Board of Education

Kevin Bokoum
Student Member
Washington County Board of Education

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this letter are the personal views of the signatories and do not necessarily reflect those of any of our respective organizations or Boards of Education.

MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT
Written by the Maryland Student Coalition

On December 12, 2020 the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (“MYAC”) voted to approve two motions:

- 1) In favor of the provided draft legislation; *and*
- 2) Assigns their Legislative Committee to assist in advocating for the initiative and promote the principles outlined in the provided resolution.

Please Note: This document is not from the Maryland Youth Advisory Council. Official written support for the Student Demonstrations Initiative can be obtained by contacting the Chairperson of MYAC, Ian Herd.

Mr. Herd can be contacted at: ianherd2004@gmail.com



A STANCE OF THE
HOWARD COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS REGARDING:

**Public Secondary School Students’ Rights to Peacefully Assemble
and Demonstrate on School Grounds and During School Hours**

Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Howard County Association of Student Councils states that “The Legislative Affairs Committee shall provide the General Assembly stances on HCPSS Policy or Legislative Matters, in writing, and the General Assembly, by majority vote, will have the ability to vote to uphold or deny that stance”; and

The Legislative Affairs Committee has provided a stance regarding a “legislative matter”, in writing, that has been approved by the Howard County Association of Student Councils General Assembly; therefore

The following stance is issued by the Howard County Association of Student Councils:

The Howard County Association of Student Councils is in favor of protections for secondary school students’ right to peacefully demonstrate on school grounds, during school hours; and

The Howard County Association of Student Councils is in favor of advancing the principles outlined in the resolution, submitted with the stance proposal (“A House Joint Resolution Concerning: Public School Students’ Rights to Peacefully Assemble and Demonstrate on School Grounds and During School Hours”) and will advocate on behalf of these proposed principles.

SPONSORED

Mr. Jonathon DiPietro, *Chair*

Mr. Peter Banyas, *Vice-Chair*

DATED

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Public School Students' Rights to Peacefully Assemble and Demonstrate on School Grounds, During School Hours

Sponsors: Helena Aytenfisu and Maeve Sanford-Kelly

WHEREAS Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association is dedicated to student advocacy and thus the ability of students to assemble is central to MCR's mission;

WHEREAS Many students are not comfortable participating in demonstrations or peaceful assemblies unaware of what protections to their freedom of assembly exist;

WHEREAS the right to freedom of speech and assembly are protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution;

WHEREAS there are school systems around Maryland that do not outline students rights and responsibilities with respect to demonstrations and assemblies as clearly and accessibly as Montgomery County Public Schools does;

WHEREAS a Maryland General Assembly resolution recognizing the rights and responsibilities of students with respect to speech and assembly, as well as encouraging school systems around Maryland to promote policies outlining these rights and responsibilities, would be an important step for further protecting students rights to advocacy; therefore

Be It Hereby Resolved: The MCR-SGA is in support of the principles outlined in the [Public School Students' Rights to Peacefully Assemble and Demonstrate on School Grounds, During School Hours](#) sample bill and will advocate on the behalf of these proposed principles.

Testimony in Support of House Bill 753
Education—Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations—
Student Discipline and Policy

House Ways and Means Committee

February 12, 2021

1:30 pm

Tina N. Dove, M.Ed.

Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 753, legislation that would prohibit a public school from prohibiting a student from engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration or imposing certain limits on a student's right to free speech. Additionally, it would prohibit a public school from disciplining a student for engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration under certain circumstances and allows a public school to impose certain limitations on said demonstrations.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

According to survey data from the PRRI/The Atlantic Civic Engagement Survey detailed in a 2018 report from PRRI¹, children who engage in civic and political activities when they are young are more likely to engage in civic activities later in life. Their survey found that,

Americans who say they went to a rally or demonstration with their parents are almost three times as likely as those who did not to score highly on the Civic and Political Engagement Scale, meaning participating in at least four different activities within the last 12 months (50% vs. 18%). Attending a community meeting, such as a school board or city council meeting, as a child

¹ *American Democracy In Crisis: Civic Engagement, Young Adult Activism, and the 2018 Midterm Elections*. Accessed online at <https://www.prrri.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Civic-Engagement-NovB.pdf> (February 3, 2021)



is also strongly associated with higher rates of civic engagement later in life. Americans who had that experience are about twice as likely as those who did not to report a high level of engagement in the last year (36% vs. 17%).

This same survey found that Americans who were influenced to become active by their teachers were more than twice as likely to be civically engaged and involved than those who said they were not influenced by their teachers (46 percent to 19 percent respectively).²

Educators take very seriously our responsibility to prepare all of our students for college, career, and citizenship. We are alarmed when we see that only 24 percent of our students scored at or above proficient in civics on the 2018 NAEP³ civics achievement assessment. An even greater cause for alarm: this score has not significantly changed when compared to score from both the 2014 and 1998 NAEP assessment.

Our democracy doesn't work if our body politic is uninformed and unengaged. The data is clear. We must teach our young people the importance of civic involvement and encourage them to actively engage at an early age. We must also teach them safe and effective ways in which to exercise their First Amendment rights to peaceably assemble and redress their grievances. School should serve as a laboratory where our students can learn their rights as citizens and practice these rights—at appropriate times and with fair and appropriate guidelines.

Our students deserve agency and a voice in their educations and in their lives. **Therefore, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 753.**

² Ibid

³ <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/civics/2018/> (Accessed on February 3, 2021)



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office of Crime
Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services
100 Community Place,
Crownsville, MD 21032

Ian Herd, *Chair*
Marvin Li, *Vice-Chair*
Maggie Harkins, *Secretary*

February 17, 2021

Re: Students' Right to Demonstrate in Schools
Position: Support

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (the Council) prides itself on being a group of young adults who work to serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities and in our State, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to advise legislators and the Governor regarding issues facing youth.

The Council advocates for the protection and expansion of youth voice in multiple settings, and extends this advocacy to educational institutions. As the resolution indicates, there are numerous counties in Maryland that employ attendance policies that have the potential to infringe upon students' First Amendment rights when used in inappropriate manners, such as the dissuasion of protest or other student-led peaceful assembly. Current attendance policies can be applied inappropriately, with penalties for missed instruction time intentionally used to discourage students from attending student demonstrations. The resolution seeks to limit the possibility for abuse of such policies and thus improve the application and preservation of students' First Amendment rights.

The Council consistently demonstrates the value and importance of youth civic engagement; visible through its advocacy outcomes and the continued activism of former Council members. Many alumni further their pursuit of civic engagement, through other youth-led organizations, coalitions, and public office. The inclusion and support of youth voice empowers young people to be productive and civically engaged citizens. Civic engagement is a valued and continuous element of the Maryland education curriculum. To limit students' rights in acts directly contributing to civic engagement is a great disservice to the students, their community, and the value of their education. When adult stakeholders support processes that meaningfully involve youth and/or allow for youth engagement, individual students can accrue relational and developmental benefits from participation and engagement itself, promoting both youth and community well-being. (e.g., Akiva, Cortina, & Smith, 2014; Larson, Walker & Pearce, 2005; Zeldin, 2004).

The Council unequivocally supports this resolution, as it creates clear guidelines and objectives to foster and protect First Amendment rights for students. Without such protections, students can be subjected to unjust interpretations and applications of school policies, with the intent to discourage and disabnd student-led demonstrations on school grounds.

For these reasons, the Council supports **Students' Right to Demonstrate in Schools**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ian Herd".

Ian Herd, Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maya Matava".

Maya Matava, Legislative Committee Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

**MASC 2021 Legislative Session
Prefiled Legislation, Bill Synopses, & Proposed Stances**

ALL RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY 2/20/21

20/21-GA-11 - HB0753 - Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

[\(Click here to view HB753\)](#)

Title: Education - Student -Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

Sponsored by: Delegate Ebersole

Committee Assignment: Ways and Means

FOR Prohibiting a public school from prohibiting a student from engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration or imposing certain limits on a student's right to free speech, subject to certain limitations; prohibiting a public school from disciplining a student for engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration under certain circumstances; authorizing a public school to impose certain limitations on a student-organized peaceful demonstration under certain circumstances; etc.

Proposed Position: SUPPORT

Resolution: *20/21-GA-11 Co-authored by Tolu Dapo-Adeyemo and Maja Durkovic, the 2020-21 MASC State Legislative Affairs Coordinators*

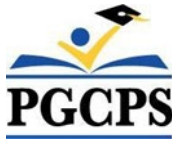
WHEREAS, we support "providing students opportunities to speak out about issues that may directly affect them." and "youth involvement in the creation and revision of legislation impacting students" (Plank I; H and I respectively), and

WHEREAS, students reserve the right to free speech, which has been verified in countless court cases, both on the federal and state level, and

WHEREAS, counties in Maryland have already established guidelines for approving student demonstrations in order to protect the free speech of students, and

WHEREAS, every student should be allowed to speak up for what they believe is right, be it hereby

RESOLVED that the Maryland Association of Student Councils supports HB0753.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Title: Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy
Bill Number: **House Bill 753** Position: **Favorable**
Hearing Date: April 1, 2021
Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Contact: Erica M. White, Esq. – (301) 952-6048

As amended, House Bill 753 bars a public school from, under specified conditions, prohibiting a student from organizing or participating in a student-organized peaceful demonstration; imposing limits that substantially inhibit a student's right to free speech while participating in a student-organized peaceful demonstration; and disciplining a student for organizing or participating in a student-organized demonstration. A school may impose reasonable limitations on the time and place of a student-organized peaceful demonstration to minimize disruptions and protect the health, safety, and welfare of students and school personnel.

The Prince George's County Board of Education is committed to providing an educational system which enables students to constructively express their rights to speech and assembly. The Board believes that defined methods that foster student activism in the school setting is conducive to the development of students as informed and engaged members of society. The Board also believes in effective student voice practices, which are designed to elevate student activism and participation through civil discourse.

House Bill 753 will encourage constructive methods of freedom of expression that will engage the student body population in a way that is fair, equitable, and consistent.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 753. Thank you for your consideration.



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
April 1, 2021**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Chao Wu, Ph.D.
Chair

Jennifer Swickard Mallo
Vice Chair

Vicky Cutroneo

Christina Delmont-Small

Yun Lu, Ph.D.

Jolene Mosley

Antonia Watts

Zachary F. Koung
Student Member

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

**HB0753: FAVORABLE W/AMENDMENTS
Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline
and Policy**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0753 Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy** to allow for peaceful student demonstrations in a manner that lifts up student voice and promotes civics engagement in schools.

Under HB0753, schools could not prohibit student-organized peaceful demonstrations but could impose reasonable limitations on the time and place in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students and school personnel, and minimize disruption to the educational environment. Local school systems would be required to adopt a policy for student demonstrations that includes guidelines for demonstrations such as manner of expression, what constitutes reasonable requirements for the time and place, and limitations on language that has the intent to harass, threaten or intimidate.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities is currently under the policy review process, with the Charter issued by the Board on November 20, 2020, including a charge to include best practices in the area of student assembly. As a matter of local interest, this particular bill stemmed from a request by current and former Howard County students who are part of an effort by the Maryland Student Coalition (MSC):
<https://mdstudentcoalition.wixsite.com/demonstrations>.

While a mandate on local policy, HCPSS staff supports the goals of this bill to recognize increasing student activism and the important role student demonstrations have in allowing the next generation of leaders to express their views on societal issues and injustices. Staff would recommend the following amendments to the version as passed by the House in order to allow local school systems the most flexibility when setting appropriate parameters:

- On page 2 strike "ON A SCHOOL BUS" in line 15 – this would eliminate concerns of the safety of demonstrations on a school bus. With only one driver in most cases, there is no staff/administrator to oversee logistics and any kind of student activity could be distracting for the driver.
- On page 3 after line 11, add "NOTHING IN THIS SECTION PROHIBITS A SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM IMPOSING DISCIPLINARY MEASURES"

FOR VIOLATIONS OF LOCAL POLICY OR STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ACTIONS OTHER THAN PARTICIPATION IN A STUDENT-ORGANIZED PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION AS OUTLINED IN SUBSECTION (E)” – while the sponsor has indicated such measures are still available to schools, an addition here would clarify subsection D and E do not limit all such authority if a student claims their actions were in connection with the demonstration.

An additional concern regarding “48 hour” notification of intent to hold a student-organized peaceful demonstration - as this could mean notification is permissible on a non-school day when 48 hours falls over the weekend or a holiday - has been addressed in amendments from the House, with the replacement language “WITHIN A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME,” which the Board supports.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0753 from this Committee with the inclusion of the suggested amendments. The Board also commend the efforts of the youth leaders in our county who turned their passion for student rights into this legislative movement.

SABINA
TAJ

HOWARD COUNTY
Board of Education

[In regards to HB0753] “I fully support students’ right to organize or participate in a student–organized peaceful demonstration.”

Sabina Taj
Member of the Howard County Board of Education (2018-2020)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MEMORANDUM: February 23, 2021

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Danielle M. Susskind, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

Subject: Recommended Positions on Education Legislation

Position: Support with Amendments

HB0753 Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

Sponsor: Delegate Ebersole

Committee: Ways and Means

Synopsis:

Prohibiting a public school from prohibiting a student from engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration or imposing certain limits on a student's right to free speech, subject to certain limitations; prohibiting a public school from disciplining a student for engaging in a student-organized peaceful demonstration under certain circumstances; authorizing a public school to impose certain limitations on a student-organized peaceful demonstration under certain circumstances; etc.

Analysis:

While the proposed HB0753 has many of needed elements itemized below, they present many problems with interpretation and implementation as currently written. The Board should only support with substantial revisions.

The requirement that a public school system have a policy is not problematic, as MCPS already has Board Policy, JFA, Student Rights and Responsibilities, and MCPS Regulation JFA-RA, Student Rights and Responsibilities. MCPS Regulation JFA-RA sets forth provisions regarding student speech and assembly in Regulation JFA-RA, section IV. Student rights to assemble are likewise recognized and supported by MCPS, under circumstances set forth in Regulation JFA-RA.

COURTESY OF:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BYJQXZ6B194C/\\$file/Board%20Positions%20As%20Of%20February%2023%2C%202021.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BYJQXZ6B194C/$file/Board%20Positions%20As%20Of%20February%2023%2C%202021.pdf)

Section IV.F of MCPS Regulation JFA-RA sets forth rights and responsibilities regarding student speech, that contain key elements which should be included in this bill, in alignment with MCPS requirements regarding the performance of a student production or the distribution of a publication or other information material, about which a principal may exercise prior restraint, halt or reject based on the following criteria, if:

- It is obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, vulgar, lewd, or contains language that has the intent to harass, threaten, or intimidate.
- It constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy.
- It incites students to create a clear and present danger of:
 - the commission of an unlawful act, the violation of Board policies and/or MCPS regulations or rules; or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the public school. “Substantial disruption” means either interference with school or disorderly conduct by a significant number of students, including rioting, school boycotts, sit-ins, destroying property, and walkouts.
- It violates state or federal law.

HB0753 Page 1 Line 25: the term “student-organized peaceful demonstration” contains subjective terminology, specifically what constitutes “peaceful” and “demonstration”. The legally recognized terms “speech” and “assembly” should be used instead with clear criteria for grounds on which a school may prohibit or discipline students for certain speech or assembly.

HB0753 Page 2 Lines 3-7 are insufficient and should be amended to include the following criteria as to what constitutes “welfare” of the school community. Again, this is highly subjective language. “Substantial disruption” is clearer, in line with case law:

“Substantial disruption” is defined in MCPS regulation to mean “either interference with school or disorderly conduct by a significant number of students, including rioting, school boycotts, sit-ins, destroying property, and walkouts.

Because the term “welfare of the community” is problematic and insufficiently defined, “speech” is better, and schools should have the ability to prohibit such speech and discipline students if such speech—

- violates state or federal law; and
- is obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, vulgar, lewd, or contains language that has the intent to harass, threaten, or intimidate otherwise causes or could be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to the operation of the school.

PLEASE NOTE: The Montgomery County Board has distributed for public comment amendments to Policy ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency. that prohibits “the use of language and or the display of images and symbols which promote hate and can be

reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. [This would be interpreted to include the display of items referenced in HB0418 at an assemblage of students or student clothing with certain symbols.]

MCPS Regulation JFA-RA, Student Rights and Responsibilities, section IV.G sets forth students' right to assemble for discussion of issues of importance to them and to demonstrate.

HB0753 Page 2 lines 20-21 are problematic because they restrict a school from prohibiting organizing or participating in a "peaceful demonstration" [again, problematic and subjective] without acknowledging the potential for such activities to take place during class. "Minimizing" disruption to class does not go far enough.

HB0753 Page 2 lines 26-27 restrict discipline for organizing, but the time, place, and manner allowance for such discipline are insufficient.



[In regards to HB0753] "Student voices matter and students often successfully lead social change campaigns. We should not only respect their right to protest but support their full participation in civic and political affairs."

Hans Riemer
Member of the Montgomery County Council