

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 737: Alternative Education Options—Right to Learn and Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Program (Right to Learn Act of 2022)

February 24, 2022

Position: Oppose

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of approximately 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, opposes House Bill 737, a bill that purports to create “scholarships” for students who attend “failing schools” and who “choose to pursue an alternative education option.” Although framed as a “scholarship” program, HB 737 is nothing more than a voucher program that would enable students to use public funds to attend private schools.

HB 737 requires participating schools to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title 20 of the State Government Article, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or sexual orientation. Notably, HB737 does not include a requirement that participating schools comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. This omission could result in public funding in the form of “scholarships” going to private schools that refuse to enroll, accommodate or otherwise serve students with disabilities. This is unacceptable. The EAC therefore strongly opposes HB 737. Please feel free to contact Leslie Seid Margolis, Chairperson, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-370-5730 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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