

Dear Chairperson Vanessa Atterbeary,

I support Maryland HB 47. Teaching diversity prepares students to be global citizens by exposing them to people from different cultures and social groups. Having teachers and staff members of diverse backgrounds affirms students' cultural identities and enhances the learning environment, as well.

Just by reading major education-related publications over the past five years, many articles indicate that students feel safer in and out of school when they have a diverse education. Through anecdotal and research-based methodologies, this has been proven. When students learn about different cultures, it allows them to become comfortable with cultural differences across all or most demographic groups, and this comfort extends to themselves; leading to a deeper sense of community safety and self-confidence.

When students reside in and attend schools in racially segregated environments, they can develop predetermined ideas or prejudices about others they do not know. Being engaged in and educated about diversity can counter discriminatory stereotypes. By learning about and understanding various cultures and social groups and their contributions to our society, students are able to make connections from their own lives to the lives of their peers of other races, ethnicities, and religions. There is a significant body of research that proves teaching diversity increases cultural competence, which in turn supports students in being more empathetic to the experiences of others.

Structured and thoughtful diversity lessons within English and social studies classes will promote depth of knowledge and give students and teachers exposure to new cultures, different historical figures, and diverse points of view.

Instruction based on the understanding of others and ourselves has been documented to deepen problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. In a diverse classroom, students bring their perspectives that challenge their peers to think beyond themselves with creativity and a more collaborative spirit to find an appropriate solution for various problems. When students are given the opportunity to work with a diverse group of peers, or with topics that discuss diversity, they can confront stereotypes and begin to realize what they have in common, as well as to celebrate what makes them different.

Exposing students to diverse experiences and people will make a positive impact on their development and can have a profound impact on our society. I support House Bill 47 as it is a gateway to understanding for all students.

Sincerely,

Steve Buettner

Head of Baltimore Lab School

Dear Ways & Means Committee members,

My name is Caitlin Curtis. I am a white educator, artist, and E.D.& I. facilitator at Baltimore Lab School, Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing to share my support of House Bill 47. This bill is an important stepping stone for the education of our children to move towards a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse curriculum. We must move away from the lies and embellishments of the white male canon and move towards an accurate history that shares the stories and perspectives of those who built this country. As of now, we are providing our students with a false curriculum that only represents those in the majority groups and does not represent Black, Indigenous, or Peoples of Color. This lack of teaching accurate history is tragic, unjust, and needs to change.

This bill is not the whole solution to this problem, but I believe this is a step in the right direction. Please vote for this bill and more bills that aim to represent the whole history, the good, the bad, and the ugly. When we do not teach the accurate curriculum, we are providing a disservice to our students and setting them up for failure, for the continuation of racist, sexist ideals, when instead we need to be pushing for empathy, understanding, acceptance, and the uplifting of BIPOC. Again, please vote yes on House Bill 47 to set the children of Maryland schools up for success. Let the voices and the perspectives of BIPOC be heard, valued, and respected.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Curtis

Hello,

I'm Nicholas Bavani, a certified teacher in the state of Maryland. I am calling upon the local government of Maryland to actively engage in creating a more inclusive history curriculum that accurately depicts our history from a fair and just perspective. I believe that our social studies courses should also include histories of multiple different cultures and communities which is not limited to the following, African-American, Hispanic History, Middle Eastern History, East Asian History, LGBTQIA History, and more.

Thank you Kindly,
Nicholas

Laura Parkhurst
407 N. Beechwood Ave.
Catonsville, MD 21218

January 30, 2022

Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee

House Bill 47

Dear Ms. Atterbeary,

I am writing to express my full support of the Maryland House Bill 47: Public Schools - Expanded American History - Development of Content Standards and Implementation. As the parent of two Baltimore County middle school students and as an educator at a Maryland Non-public Special Education Facility or MANSEF school, I believe the expansion of American History standards and curriculum is paramount to providing all Maryland public school students a complete picture of our country's history. Requiring the inclusion of the history and contributions of African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, Women and other marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ+ community is vital to ensuring our youth understand our history from diverse perspectives and are able to analyze and think critically about events in our nation's history; the impact of those events over time and into the present moment; and how to use that information to develop the skills they will need to contribute to their own communities and a global just society, well into the future. In addition I believe strongly that diverse representation in public school curriculum, literature and discourse is crucial for Maryland youth belonging to marginalized communities as well as, all Maryland students in order to know and understand that the contributions of many and all have built our nation's history, not just the contributions of our country's dominant white culture. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura Parkhurst

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

This bill is about including more education in schools on the history and the viewpoints of minority groups. This is extremely important because it is vital that we hold ourselves accountable for our past actions. Learning about the things we have done in the past can also help spread empathy and awareness of past and current repercussions that are happening in our society. It will hopefully encourage young people to be more involved with politics and the future of our country, as well as more activism, and people will be encouraged to stand up for what they believe and what they think is right. As Senators and public political figures, you all have a responsibility to use the power and voice that you have to stand up for others and to make the world a better place, which is what I hope you would want if you entered politics. It is important that we all stand up for the disenfranchised and to teach our younger generations the same thing, as well as using schools to educate them on what happened, why it was wrong, and what we can do to make amends and to right the wrongs our ancestors have done against so many, and as they are not here to take accountability themselves, we must do it. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I really hope this letter inspires you to be on the right side of history.

From,

Dana B.

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

My name is Lucas Correal and I am a student at Baltimore Lab School. I am writing to you because I want to show support for House Bill 47. I believe that history lessons should include more about Hispanics because we as Americans don't show enough care and are discriminatory against Hispanics to this day. We need to stand up for more people in the Hispanic culture and show that we care for them. One personal story I had to deal with was getting called a racial slur. I was walking around my neighborhood taking my dog on a walk and someone just randomly called me a "spic." This experience hurt me and I was shocked that this is still a thing. I believe we need to show more support towards the Hispanic culture by enacting House Bill 47 into law to teach students empathy for cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Sincerely,

Lucas C.

Dear Vanessa

As Americans, we must have our education teach us about the different backgrounds of those who were here before European settlers and those who immigrated to America from around the world in search of a better life. In order to do this, we must explain the hardships of what they went through. Doing this will allow us to fully understand our history in order to not repeat such inequalities of the past, and allow us to improve society. I know that some parents are concerned that their children will feel bad and responsible for the terrible mistakes that have happened in our past. I do understand what they mean but, we should tell parents that are concerned about this that children in Germany when learning about the holocaust do not shine away from the most horrible parts of it. You should also tell parents who think this that students would be taught this stuff not to make them feel bad, but is instead there to teach students how terrible an event was so it is not repeated in the future and that their children can be the ones to stand up any evil by looking at history. Also mention how history is important for democracy because it allows us to see what the policies of a leader will do to the country. These reasons are a small reason why we need unbiased and accurate history lessons. Also, could you also look into and encourage the Maryland legislature to invest more in lab schools, adopt the metrics system, STEM programs, programs to help students from low-income families and towards those with learning disabilities (those with learning disabilities should not be in the same program with those behavioral disabilities due to distractions. I was in that situation before in middle school at a different school.),and teacher pay raise. I just want Maryland to have the best schools.

Sincerely A BLS student.

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

As a 12th grader at Baltimore Lab School in Baltimore Maryland I wanted to share my support of HB47 because I believe that students should receive an accurate history that includes perspective and stories from people that don't look like me. I am a white male and I want to learn about different countries and cultures in order to become more empathetic and understanding of differences. This bill will help create a more accurate historical curriculum for all students in Maryland schools.

Sincerely,

Aiden F

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

I'm a student at Baltimore Lab School in Baltimore, Maryland. I am in support of House Bill 47. I believe that history lessons should be accurate that includes the real facts of how people of color felt or were back in the day, then just sugarcoat everything to make it seem like everybody was on the same page when they weren't. When we sugar coat things in history we teach the young brains that, that's how it should be. As a white female, I think we need more empathy for differences in the communities. We need to pass this bill because I can't believe this is still going on in the twenty-first century. I think this is going to help people see that we can understand others' points of view. I give my full support for the passing of bill 47, make it happen.

Sincerely,

Leah P.

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

My name is Joanna Shang. I am a student at Baltimore Lab School in Baltimore Maryland. I am in support of House Bill 47 because I think that it's a good idea to teach students a diverse history that includes multiple ethnic groups. I am passionate about embracing diversity and I think that students should be educated about multiple ethnic backgrounds. The history and stories of people who have made a difference and changed the world should be shared with students.

As a biracial autistic feminist myself I want students to receive an accurate history that includes perspectives and stories from people that do not look like me. In my opinion, I think that everybody should have a say and everybody's voices should be heard. No one deserves to be discriminated against because of their voice, skin color, race, ethnicity, gender, and gender identity. History of a variety of different people of a different ethnic background should be educated in schools.

I am very passionate about acceptance, inclusion, coming together, embracing diversity, and people being themselves. One change I really want to see in the schools is a more accurate history education. One change I really want to see in the world is celebrating gifts, differences, and coming together.

Yours Truly,

Joanna S.

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

My name is Ivan Walsh and I go to Baltimore Lab School Baltimore, MD. I would like to show my support for House Bill 47 because I believe that the education system has failed its students for decades. They have misrepresented many different ethnic backgrounds for long enough and it's time that it should be taught correctly. Schools have been using the same underrepresented material and it's time for a change for the better. Change has never come fast enough for things like LGBTQI++ equality or racial justice and I think that education is the best place to start. If we start teaching the generations who will be in charge of the future, we'll have a future.

With gratitude,

Ivan Walsh

Dear Vanessa Atterbeary,

My name is Sam Wilmot and I am a student at Baltimore Lab School in Baltimore, Maryland. I am in support of House Bill 47 because I believe that everyone should have an accurate history of different people and their cultures. As a member of the LGBTQ community I want the stories of people of the LGBTQ community that have made a difference in the world and how they changed society's view of LGBTQ people and fought for the rights of LGBTQ people. The younger generation should be aware and be educated about LGBTQ rights and the difficulties that LGBTQ people have faced.

Sincerely,

Sam Wilmot