

HB0850_Schools_Discrimination_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0850 Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wilkins

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0850 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

Our members do not support discrimination in any shape or form. They are specifically concerned when that discrimination involves public funds that are being given to a private school.

Schools that take public money should not be allowed to discriminate. This bill would preclude any county board, public pre-school or public primary or secondary school, non-public pre-school that receives state funds, or non-public primary or secondary school that receives state funds from discriminating against or refusing enrollment to a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

There are exclusions for schools that have always enrolled a single gender or schools that are affiliated with a specific religion (although accommodation should be made for the student).

Public funds should be used to ensure that all of our children have a good education. Diverting funds from public schools, which accept all students, to private schools, which can discriminate is not only a poor use of funds, but the outcome for the students and all of us is very poor.

We support the bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

HB0850_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Charlie Wedderin

Position: FAV

Bill: HB850
Title: County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools – Discrimination – Prohibition
Date: March 3, 2022
Committee: Ways and Means Committee
Position: **Favorable**

To Members of the Committee:

Today I submit testimony in support of House Bill 850, the Inclusive Schools Act. My name is Charlie Wedderien, I am bisexual and nonbinary. I am a recent graduate of Richard Montgomery High School, and am attending my first year of college in California. While at Richard Montgomery, I was both in my school's Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA) and was the president of a county-wide student LGBTQ organization called MoCo Pride. Across these two groups, there was one thing in common: these organizations were formed by LGBTQ students, for LGBTQ students, to support each other, because we did not receive support from our schools or the adults in our lives.

High school is often referred to as care-free days of our lives, free from adult responsibilities. For the most part this is true. Students generally do not have to worry about rent, bills, and the challenges of our world. But high school can be terrifying and filled with worry for different reasons. Many student members of MoCo Pride complain of verbal attacks, sexual harrasment, and threats of physical assault. I myself have heard slurs yelled across our hallways with no repercussions. Students do not have confidence to report it to staff, because it does not seem like our faculty is not equipped to support us, and sometimes even join in on the abuse. They misgender and dead name us, make excuses for other students when incidents are reported, and appear to be either ignorant or inconsiderate of our vulnerability as LGBTQ students. Our education and high school experience worsens as a result. It is difficult to learn when you are afraid of you cllasmatesand worried that your teacher will not help. This fears transforms schools from places of learning and excitement of the future, to places of trauma.

We are still students of your schools. We want to spend our time worry about homework, tests, and if our crush will go to prom with us. We do not want to worry that if we bring our crush to prom, we will be banned from participating. We need to know that there is policies protecting us and that there is recourse we can take to regain the feeling of safety and belonging that is ripped away in that moment. We are citizens and Marylanders too, and should be afforded basic protections, including access to safe and quality education.

In order for policies to be effective and enforceable, they need to be written down and made available to all students and their families. Without our schools commitment, in writing, to not tolerating discrimination in schools, LGBTQ students have little to no assurance of their safety and protections.

Students are doing our best to make our schools better from the ground, like our creation safe spaces for LGBTQ students, but you have the power to make real change across the state and for students who, by no fault of their own, are in schools that do have similar support groups. I ask you, to honor the trust placed in you as our parents and leaders, to protect all students of your state. Please vote in favor of House Bill 850.

Sincerely,

Charlie Wedderin (they/them)
Richard Montgomery High School, '21
Former President of MoCo Student Pride

Testimony-Individual HB0850.pdf

Uploaded by: Haleigh LaChance

Position: FAV

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB0850 Inclusive Schools Act**

Individual Submission: Haleigh LaChance, resident MD-001, Wicomico County

Position: **Favorable**

I am submitting testimony in FAVOR of HB0850, as a parent and resident in Wicomico County.

The current MSDE guidelines on protection of students on the basis of sexual or gender identity are not codified into law, and as such, they are not uniformly applied across the state. In our Wicomico County Public Schools (WCPS) these guidelines are not used or enforced, and no other written policies or procedures exist to protect LGBTQ+ students.

I serve on the Board of Directors for PFLAG Salisbury, our local PFLAG chapter. We receive regular reports from local middle- and high-school students of teachers and administrators acting contrary to the MSDE guidance, and *not* supporting the education and development of LGBTQ+ students. This includes discouraging or being hostile to GSA (Gender and Sexuality Awareness or Gay-Straight Alliance) clubs, downplaying reports of harassment or bullying, notifying parents of a students' sexual orientation, referring to students by a former name, and suggesting that LGBTQ+ students move to a more accepting district or homeschool. These behaviors contribute to a hostile environment for LGBTQ+ students, and increase the barriers these students face in receiving their education.

This law will extend protections to all students at our public and Federally-supported private schools, so these behaviors are not acceptable in our county, or anywhere Maryland. The law will provide a remedy process to resolve discrimination complaints, prohibit retaliation against individual students, and require school districts to develop written policies on protecting LGBTQ+ students.

This law will ensure that the values and civil rights protections for which Maryland is known are extended to our youngest residents, even those in counties far-flung from Annapolis. I urge a favorable report in committee.

HB0850_Fav_FreeState Justice.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy LaMaster

Position: FAV



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Bill: HB850
Title: County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools – Discrimination – Prohibition
Date: March 3, 2022
Committee: Ways and Means Committee
Position: Favorable

To the Esteemed Members of the Committee:

FreeState Justice is a statewide legal advocacy organization that seeks to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (“LGBTQ”) Marylanders. We work across Maryland to provide free civil legal aid to LGBTQ Marylanders with low incomes facing discrimination. Those clients include students in Maryland schools facing individual bullying and systemic discrimination.

Studies conducted both statewide and nationally have shown that LGBTQ students experience various challenges in the classroom. The majority of LGBTQ students reported feeling unsafe in their schools (64% of LGB students and 44% of transgender students, respectively).¹ The majority of Maryland LGBTQ students regularly hear anti-LGBTQ comments in their schools, and 65% report experiencing harassment or assault based on their identity. Equally distressing, most students (54%) never reported the incident to school staff, and only 29% of students who reported incidents said it resulted in staff intervention.²

These experiences have severe impacts on student learning and school climate and the safety, health, and wellbeing of Maryland students. The Trevor Project, a national LGBTQ crisis intervention and suicide prevention service for youth, received nearly **1,500 calls from Maryland LGBTQ youth in crisis each year**, many of whom consider self-harm or suicide.

¹ Youth Equality Alliance, Living in the Margins, A Report on the Challenges of LGBTQ Youth in Maryland Education, Foster Care, and Juvenile Justice Systems (2014).

² Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation’s schools. New York: GLSEN.

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The same survey mentioned previously found that only 12.6% of their students reported that their schools had comprehensive non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies. Research has demonstrated that students in schools with published comprehensive non-discrimination policies were less likely to hear negative LGBTQ remarks and were more likely to report that staff intervened when hearing discriminatory remarks. Though the Maryland State Department of Education has issued guidelines on serving LGBTQ students, it has not translated to practice. Across Maryland's counties and even within school districts, students and families are navigating a patchwork of rules and policies or lack thereof. Experiences vary wildly from district to district, school to school, and even classroom to classroom.

Establishing a clearly written and easily accessible anti-discrimination policy can reduce or eliminate discrimination and bullying amongst students. For example, in an examination of 25 states, researchers found that bullying occurred significantly less in states where students were provided with anti-bullying guidelines³. Other benefits of a published non-discrimination policy include:

- For schools that have policies that specifically protect students against sexual and gender discrimination, LGBTQ+ students reported more feelings of safety, less victimization, and less social aggression from their peers⁴
- Feeling safe in school leads to higher levels of academic achievement in Black and Latinx youth⁵
- Anti-discrimination policies decrease truancy among first- and second-generation immigrant children⁶

Without clear policies that provide students with procedures they can take following an experience with discrimination, it is challenging for families to protect their children. Lack of action creates a hostile school climate by allowing and empowering students to continue engaging in discriminatory behavior⁷

For students facing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, it can be even more challenging to navigate the varying administrative processes to address discriminatory behavior in a school or district. This bill would give families clarity in how to notify and address discriminatory behavior impacting their students.

³ Hatzenbuehler, Mark L., Laura Schwab-Reese, Shabbar I. Ranapurwala, Marci F. Hertz, and Marizen R. Ramirez. "Associations between antibullying policies and bullying in 25 states." *JAMA Pediatrics* 169, no. 10 (2015): 1-8.

⁴ Ryan, R. M., Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Villenas, C. "Effectiveness of school district antibullying policies in improving LGBT youths' school climate." *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, no. 4 (2016): 407-415

⁵ Ruiz, L. D., McMahon, S. D., & Jason, L. A. "The role of neighborhood context and school climate in school-level academic achievement." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, no. 61 (2018): 296-309

⁶ Yang, K. & Ham, S., "Truancy as systemic discrimination: Anti-discrimination legislation and its effect on school attendance among immigrant children." *The Social Science Journal*, no. 2 (2017): 216-226

⁷ Yang, Jenny R. and Liu, Jane. "Strengthening accountability for discrimination: Confronting fundamental power imbalances in the employment relationship." (2021). *Economic Policy Institute*.

LGBTQ students deserve to have safe and affirming school spaces. If their wellbeing or safety is being threatened at school, policies should be in place to support them. This legislation will best support LGBTQ students by establishing a complaint and remedy process by which a student and their family can work with MSDE to resolve the discriminatory action. FreeState Justice wholeheartedly supports HB1204, which will codify anti-discrimination protections for all students. This bill aims to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

FreeState Justice strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB0098.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jeremy LaMaster (he/they)
Executive Director



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HB850 JW Written Testimony.pdf

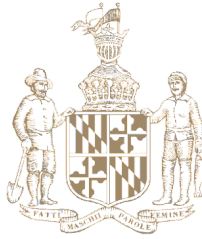
Uploaded by: Jheanelle Wilkins

Position: FAV

JHEANELLE WILKINS
Legislative District 20
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PARLIAMENTARIAN

Ways and Means Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3, 2022

**House Bill 850 - Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education -
Discrimination**

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **House Bill 850 - Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination**, which prohibits county boards of education, certain schools, and prekindergarten programs from discriminating against any student or prospective student because of the individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Currently, state regulations establish that all public school students have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from harassment. However, unlike employment and fair housing laws in the state, Maryland's education laws do not have codified anti-discrimination protections for all schools. In recent years, there have been a number of cases where schools that receive public funds have explicitly discriminatory language, including language excluding LGBTQ students, in their student handbooks and admissions policies.

HB 850 not only deters schools from creating these discriminatory practices in the first place, but it codifies protections for students and requires schools to have written policies that prohibit discrimination. Furthermore, this bill provides students a legal complaint and remedy process if they have been discriminated against. House Bill 850 still allows private schools to administer preliminary admissions testing, as long as the requirements don't exclude students in a discriminatory manner.

This committee has always fought to uphold federal civil rights laws to protect students from different types of discrimination. Schools that receive state aid are funded by all of us, including people of different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, etc. No student should have to face discrimination or be denied their right to an education, and we must ensure equal protection and fair treatment for all students. For these reasons, I ask that the committee give a **favorable** report for **House Bill 850**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

HB 850_FAV_ACLUMD_Nalley.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Nalley

Position: FAV



**Testimony for the House Ways and Means Committee
March 3, 2022**

**HB 850- Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of
Education - Discrimination**

JUSTIN NALLEY
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYST

FAVORABLE

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ANDREW FREEMAN
GENERAL COUNSEL

The ACLU of Maryland urges the committee to support HB 850, which will codify anti-discrimination protections for a person's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in Pre-K-12 who are enrolled in our public schools and in schools receiving public funding.

Current law fails to protect students from discrimination

The patchwork of provisions governing the public funding of private schools leaves several gaps that allow for students to face discrimination without redress. Unlike other parts of Maryland law, such as public accommodations, employment, and fair housing, Maryland's education laws do not have codified anti-discrimination protections. MSDE does have stated guidance, but the guidance does not provide the legal protections of a codified anti-discrimination policy. This legislation simply codifies the MSDE guidance. Consider, for example, the millions of taxpayer dollars the state spends on BOOST funding — private schools receiving that funding are prohibited from discriminating in student admissions alone, not retention; are free to discriminate against teachers; and worst of all face no legal recourse for violating the rules of the program. Therefore, students and teachers who face discrimination in BOOST schools are without protection. This is especially concerning in light of school discipline trends showing that students of color face disparate expulsion rates.

In addition to ensuring that private schools do not discriminate, Maryland law also needs to ensure that public schools do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Current law fails to provide a remedy for discrimination

Students who experience discrimination in private schools that receive BOOST funding do not currently have a clear process by which they can file a complaint or seek a remedy. By requiring schools to have clear policies on discrimination, as they do for student codes of conduct, students will know how to file a complaint and resolve the discriminatory action.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 850.

EACtestimony2022.HB850.pdf

Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: FAV

Education Advocacy Coalition For Students with Disabilities

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 850: SCHOOLS, PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS, AND COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—DISCRIMINATION

MARCH 3, 2022

POSITION: SUPPORT

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 supports House Bill 850, which would prevent discrimination against students and employees in schools receiving state funds.

Pursuant to House Bill 850, an elementary or secondary school that receives state funds would be unable to refuse enrollment, expel, withhold privileges from or discriminate against any student or prospective student because of the individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. For students with disabilities, this provision ensures that if families choose to enroll their child with a disability in a private school that is not required to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 20 U.S.C. §794, because it does not receive federal funds, or with the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 *et. seq.* because it is run by a religious organization, their children will be protected against disability-based discrimination. **House Bill 850 does not mandate that every student with a disability, no matter how severe, must be admitted to and served by a private school from which the student's parents seek enrollment. Nor does House Bill 850 mandate that schools receiving state funds in accord with this bill provide all of the services to a student with a disability that the student would receive from the public school system in accord with the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400, *et. seq.*** In fact, House Bill 850 makes clear that students must meet the eligibility requirements of the school to be enrolled, so long as those eligibility requirements are not discriminatory. House Bill 850 simply requires that in making such decisions, private schools that receive state funds not engage in discrimination, and that those schools provide reasonable accommodation.

For these reasons, the EAC supports House Bill 850. For additional information, please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, Chairperson, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-370-5730.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland
Linda Barton, Ms.Ed., Education Advocate
Elizabeth Benevides, Howard County Autism Society
Ellen A. Callegary, Law Offices of Ellen A. Callegary, P.A.
Rich Ceruolo, Parent Advocacy Consortium
Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success
Jennifer Engel Fisher, Weinfeld Education Group, LLC
Shamoyia Gardiner, Strong Schools Maryland

Ann Geddes, Maryland Coalition of Families
Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate
Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network
Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland
Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center
Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
Maria Ott, Attorney
Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism
Jaime Seaton, BGS Law
Ronnetta Stanley, Loud Voices Together
Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group, LLC
Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint
Maureen van Stone, Mallory Finn Legg and Alyssa Thorn, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute
Daya Chaney Webb, IMPACT Advocacy
Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition

MAYSB - HB 850 FAV - School Antidiscrimination.pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Park

Position: FAV



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

**Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 850 – Inclusive School Acts
March 3, 2022
Support**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB) represents a network of bureaus throughout the State who provide mental health services and other supports for young people and their families. Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) work with students experiencing school difficulties including discrimination and know the impact such discrimination can have on their mental health. MAYSB supports *House Bill 850 – County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools - Discrimination – Prohibition*.

This bill is important legislation that will ensure anti-discrimination protections for all students, Pre-K-12th grade who are enrolled in Maryland public schools and in schools receiving public funding. Specifically, this bill prohibits discrimination based on one's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Students who experience discrimination can experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Such issues can negatively impact the student's school attendance and performance and thus their school success.

Currently, students who experience discrimination do not have a clear process by which they can file a complaint or seek a remedy. This bill requires Maryland schools to have specific anti-discrimination policies and procedures. By requiring schools to have clear policies on discrimination, as they do for student codes of conduct, students will know how to file a complaint and resolve the discriminatory action. This legislation also ensures nondiscrimination protections for students experiencing discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. This legislation is important because it codifies the current MSDE guidance on anti-discrimination and extends these protections through law to all students.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. We urge a favorable vote.

Respectfully Submitted:

Liz Park, PhD
MAYSB Chair
lpark@greenbeltmd.gov

3-3 LWVMD HB 850 Schools, Prekindergarten Programs

Uploaded by: Lois Hybl

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 850 Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng – President

Date: March 3, 2022

The League of Women Voters (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League supports social policies that secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all, and that promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans. While LWVMD opposes public funding for vouchers or other aid for private and parochial schools, we support measures to forbid discrimination by schools that do receive such aid.

Therefore, LWVMD supports HB 850 which would codify anti-discrimination protections for all students, Pre-K-12 who are enrolled in public schools and in schools receiving public funding. This bill prohibits schools that receive State funds, from refusing enrollment of a prospective student, expelling a current student, or withholding privileges from or otherwise discriminating against a current or prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student, on the basis of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. There would be a complaint, mediation, and appeal process for violations. All or part of State funding may be withheld from a board, program, or school that violates the nondiscrimination requirements.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland with 1500+ members urges the committee to give a favorable report to HB 850

HB0850 Schools PreK and County Boards Education_Di

Uploaded by: Margo Quinlan

Position: FAV

**House Bill 850 Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education –
Discrimination**

House Ways and Means Committee

March 3, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health, mental illness and substance use. MHAMD appreciates this opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 850.

HB 850 would prohibit a local board of education, a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school, or a public or nonpublic prekindergarten program that receives state funds from refusing enrollment of, expelling, withholding privileges from, or otherwise discriminating against any student or prospective student due to their race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. It also requires local boards of education to adopt and maintain a written anti-discrimination policy as well as requiring nonpublic prekindergarten, primary, and secondary schools that receive state funding to develop and maintain a written anti-discrimination policy that prohibits discrimination.

A majority of LGBTQ students have reported feeling unsafe in their schools (64% of lesbian, gay or bisexual students and 44% of transgender students) with over 90% of Maryland students reporting hearing their classmates use anti-LGBTQ language on a regular basis. Staff and administration may contribute to this discrimination as well, with 21% of Maryland students reporting staff using homophobic language and 26% observing school staff making negative remarks about someone's gender expression.¹ Harassment for LGBTQ students doesn't end in the classroom, with cyberbullying leading to increased discrimination and harassment. Nearly 50% of LGBTQ students have experienced electronic harassment.²

Ultimately, the vast majority of LGBTQ students (86.3%) report experiencing harassment or assault based on personal characteristics including sexual orientation and gender expression. LGBTQ students who reported more severe victimization regarding their sexual orientation or gender expression report lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depression. For

¹ Youth Equality Alliance. (2014). *Living in the Margins, A Report on the Challenges of LGBTQ Youth in Maryland Education, Foster Care, and Juvenile Justice Systems*. <https://freestate-justice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YEA-Report-2014.pdf>

² Kosciw, J., Clark, C., Truong, N., & Zongrone, A., *The 2019 National School Climate Survey The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in Our Nation's Schools*. GLSEN, 2019. <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/NSCS19-111820.pdf>

For more information contact:

Margo Quinlan, Director of Youth & Older Adult Policy: 410-236-5488 / mquinlan@mhamd.org

transgender youth in particular, over 50% of all transgender and nonbinary youth in the US report seriously considering suicide at some point in their lives.³

Numerous studies indicate that LGBTQ populations are at particular risk of psychological distress and associated impairment, primarily from elevated exposure to stigma-related minority stress.^{4,5} Minority stress is unique, socially based, and chronic, and may make LGBTQ youth more vulnerable to development of behavioral health concerns such as anxiety, depression, or substance use.⁶

There is an on-going crisis of abuse and discrimination being perpetuated against LGBTQ youth in Maryland schools that is contributing to alarmingly high rates of mental health concerns and suicidality. HB 850 would expand non-discrimination policies to better protect these youth and support mental wellness in our schools. For these reasons, MHAMD urges a favorable report on HB 850.

³ GLSEN (2019). *The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in Our Nation's Schools*. <http://glsen.org/research/2019-national-school-climate-survey>

⁴ Reisner SL, Poteat T, Keatley J, et al. (2016). *Global health burden and needs of transgender populations: a review*. *Lancet* 2016; 388:412–43. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7035595/>

⁵ Dhejne C, Van Vlerken R, Heylens G, et al. (2016). *Mental health and gender dysphoria: a review of the literature*. *International Review of Psychiatry* 2016; 28:44–57. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26835611/>

⁶ Institute of Medicine. (2011). *The health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people: Building a foundation for better understanding*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64806/>

HB 850 - Education.pdf

Uploaded by: Marijane Mnck

Position: FAV

Indivisible HoCoMD

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB0850 - Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Wilkins and Charles

POSITION: FAVORABLE

By: Marijane Monck, Education Action Team Member, Indivisible Howard County

Date: March 1, 2022

Indivisible Howard County supports HB 850 and is looking for a favorable report on this bill.

No child should be subjected to discrimination when it comes to their education and parents and guardians should be made aware of this policy so that they can make the best decisions for their children.

TESTIMONY-HB0850-SB0666 Schlehofer.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Schlehofer

Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB 0850/SB 0666 Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Michele Copper, Board Member

Position: **FAVORABLE**

SALISBURY PFLAG SUPPORTS THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS ACT

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of HB 0850/SB 0666 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

I want to take a few minutes to explain why passing the Inclusive Schools Act is so important to me. I have two children enrolled in Wicomico County Public Schools. When I enrolled my oldest child in school a decade ago, I asked the principal of his school two very simple questions: What training has your school staff had to work with LGBTQ+ youth? And what policies does the district have in place specific to LGBTQ+ youth? The answer to both questions was “none and none.” I offered to provide resources and access to training to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth. In response to this, the principal told me in no uncertain terms that if I was expecting teachers in my child’s school district to have training on working with LGBTQ+ youth, that I should “move to a metropolitan area, like D.C.” I left the meeting with the principal feeling demoralized and berated.

Returning home, I scoured the Wicomico County Public Schools website for any policies or even *mention* of how LGBTQ+ youth are supported in the district. The principal knew his policy, as he was correct: There was none. The website does not even mention LGBTQ+ youth; it’s like LGBTQ+ kids do not exist.

In 2015, I formed Salisbury’s PFLAG Chapter to help push for greater visibility and support for LGBTQ+ people in our community. Since 2015, I have met a steady stream of parents and youth who describe to me severe injustices occurring in our county public schools and area private schools. These include but are not limited to instances of verbal harassment—including by school staff; administrative and public opposition to the formation of GSAs (which are supportive clubs for LGBTQ+ youth); gendered graduation gowns, which alienate and ostracize trans and nonbinary youth; and teachers and school staff who do not honor youth’s pronouns or names. I have met LGBTQ+ kids in our county schools that

don't feel comfortable attending school events, refuse to use the bathrooms at their school, and have even skipped their own graduation ceremony as they felt unsupported. While there are also some positive supports, spurred by the actions of individual teachers and staff who care for our LGBTQ+ youth, we need consistent policies and guidelines across our schools to ensure that children are treated equitably. Otherwise, our children and parents like me are left navigating a system in which we have to proactively seek out supportive faces and spaces.

These types of supports are important for ensuring that our children have every opportunity to excel in school. LGBTQ+ youth in unsupportive school climates miss more school, are less likely to graduate, have a lower GPA, and are less likely to go to college. School climates matter. Our LGBTQ+ youth matter. Our LGBTQ+ youth deserve a supportive school climate which is inclusive of them and their needs.

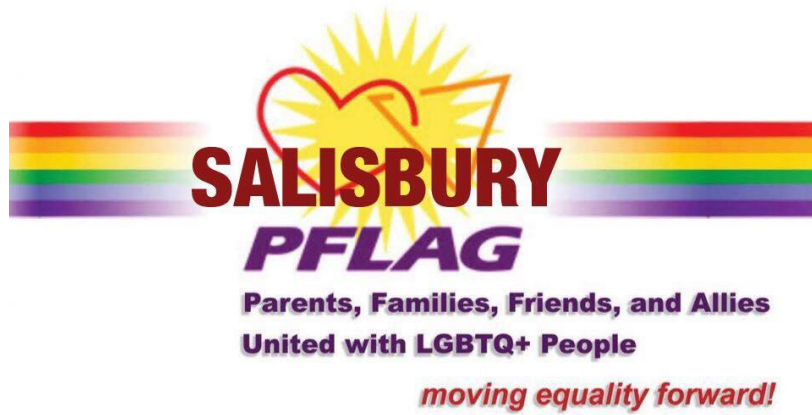
Yet, here it is a decade since enrolling my oldest child in Wicomico County Public Schools, and little has changed. LGBTQ+ youth remain marginalized in our schools. Our County continues to overlook the importance of supports for LGBTQ+ youth; no non-discrimination policies or guidelines in our County which explicitly identify and protect LGBTQ+ youth exist. When PFLAG Salisbury last approached our Superintendent of Schools in late 2021 asking whether policies specific to protecting and meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ youth exist in our district, we were once again referred to general non-discrimination protections. It is clear no policies specific to our youth exist. General protections are insufficient to protecting our youth. Research has consistently demonstrated that schools with non-discrimination protections which explicitly identify and protect LGBTQ+ youth are the schools that create supportive school environments for LGBTQ+ children. Further, these schools have more inclusive, supportive school environments overall, meaning that all children benefit when LGBTQ+ youth are supported in school.

Please, I call upon our Delegates in Annapolis to enact the Inclusive Schools Act. We need this bill enacted into law. Our LGBTQ+ youth deserve to be protected within all schools in Maryland which receive public funds. HB0850/SB0666 is a major step forward to providing equitable and inclusive education in Maryland public schools, and would greatly help us here in Wicomico County and in other parts of the Eastern Shore in serving our LGBTQ+ youth. Therefore, PFLAG Salisbury Inc. supports this legislation and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.

TESTIMONY HB0850 SB0666 HOLLYWOOD.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicole Hollywood

Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB 0850/SB 0666 Inclusive Schools Act**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, President of the Board

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon committee, and thank you for your time. My name is Nicole Hollywood. I am a resident of Maryland's Eastern Shore residing in district 37. I am a Professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a volunteer with Salisbury PFLAG, and a parent to multiple LGBTQIA+ children.

While a handful of counties have taken pro-active measures, there remain no State-wide anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ learners. These insufficient protections for and inequities in the treatment of LGBTQIA+ learners enrolled in Maryland schools contribute to a climate that is unsupportive and even often hostile. Because of the lack of protections, LGBTQ+ youth continue to face bullying, exclusion, and discrimination in school, putting them at physical and psychological risk and limiting their education.

Research conducted on LGBTQIA+ youth in schools has found that an unsupportive educational climate contributes to lower academic performance, lower GPA, increased absences, increased likelihood of school dropout, psychological distress, and a decreased likelihood of attending an institution of higher education.

According to the most recent GLSEN School Climate Survey, 98% of LGBTQ+ students have heard the term gay used in a negative way or other homophobic remarks; more than 1/2 of students have heard homophobic remarks from teachers or school staff; 86% of students have experienced harassment or assault based on their actual or perceived gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, race, or ethnicity; and 59% of LGBTQ+ students feel unsafe at school.

As a parent of children in Wicomico County Schools, I can affirm the hostile environment and the bombardment of homophobic remarks my kids have faced. Further, teachers and administrators are often the worst perpetrators. In fact, I was called to come to my middle son's middle school when he was in 8th grade and cornered by three teachers who felt compelled to out my wonderful high, performing child and request that I gender police his behavior because they considered an openly gay

student to be a distraction to the learning environment in their STEM honors program and they could not guarantee his safety. These educators did not know me and were not aware of whether I was a supportive parent or whether their actions could have put my son in danger. One of the teachers repeatedly told me that he is a Christian and a Sunday School teacher, which I perceived as a formal declaration of his hostility towards my child. He further added that he had been speaking to my sons classmates about my son and the discussion revolved around their discomfort regarding his sexual orientation.

I left that encounter, and after crying in my car in the school parking lot for a half-hour, I realized that I needed to do everything in my power to initiate change. I now sit here in front of you as a parent and activist, asking for a favorable report out of committee for HB0850/SB0666, which would codify anti-discrimination protections for all students, pre-k through 12, who are enrolled in our public schools and in any other schools receiving public funding.

HB850.Anti School Discrimination.DD Council.Suppor

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 850: Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination

March 3, 2022

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's (DD Council) vision is that people with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and play together. **HB 850 does just that by prohibiting discrimination in public and nonpublic schools.** Parents who choose to send their children to private schools must be free to do so. However, **public funds should not be used to assist attendance of children at those schools that do not provide equitable opportunities for children with and without disabilities to learn with and from each other.** If Maryland is going to use state funds to provide scholarships for students to attend private schools, certain civil rights should be protected.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **Private schools that do not receive federal funds are not required to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.** Section 504 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Private schools run by religious organizations are not required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** The ADA ensures that students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity for participation in the programs, services and activities offered by the school.
- **Subtle forms of discrimination can be present in every aspect of the educational process** - from admissions to classroom instruction to physical accessibility. For example, telling a family their child might feel more comfortable or be better served elsewhere or refusing to make requested accommodations. Reasonable accommodations allow a student to access a school's programs and services.

WHAT does this legislation do?

Requires school systems to develop antidiscrimination policies that prohibit public and private schools from:

- Discriminating against any person because of the individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, **or disability.**
- Refusing enrollment of, expelling, or withholding privileges from any student or prospective student because of the individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, **or disability.**
- Disciplining, invoking a penalty against, or taking any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the school discriminated against the student.

The protections afforded by this bill make schools safer and more welcoming for all students. A positive, enriching environment is vital for every student's success, including students with disabilities.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director: RLondon@md-council.org

217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 1300 • Baltimore, MD 21202 • 410.767.3670 • md-council.org

Kalani Brown, *Chairperson* • Rachel London, Esq., *Executive Director*

MSPA HB 850 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Scott Tiffin

Position: FAV



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 850 - Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education - Discrimination

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

The purpose of this letter is to share our support for Senate Bill 98, which would prohibit discrimination against any person on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. This legislation would also protect individuals from being denied enrollment or from retaliation after filing a complaint alleging discrimination. Importantly, the language in the bill provides exceptions for religiously-affiliated institutions and schools with single-sex enrollment.

While the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has published guidance on antidiscrimination protections, these protections are not currently guaranteed by law. We feel that it is important that such protections are codified into state law. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 98.

If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please feel free to contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Member, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

House Bill 850_Favorable.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Shamoyia Gardiner

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Testimony to the Ways & Means Committee

In support of

House Bill 850: Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education –Discrimination

March 3, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on House Bill 850: Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education –Discrimination.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state’s students. This vision harkens to an ideal of equitable access to opportunities for all students, a critical precursor to actually realizing world-class schools. The Blueprint’s investment in early childhood education is grounded in a “mixed-delivery” (public and private) strategy to expand prekindergarten offerings equitably to all four year olds and qualifying three year olds in the state. House Bill 850 will bolster the positive academic outcomes from the Blueprint’s investment by requiring program providers to refrain from mistreating and discriminating against those they serve.

Public dollars should be put to use for the public good. House Bill 850 does many things, though its most vital provision is that it would prohibit nonpublic education institutions that receive public funds from discriminating against students and families on the basis of their race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. The very institution of public education is wavering in real time; if public dollars are to be diverted to nonpublic use, the very least the state should do is condition the funds with the fair treatment of Marylanders.

When young children experience discrimination in their earliest interactions with formalized education settings, they internalize messages about themselves, how welcome they are, and their capacity to learn. Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 850 because we believe this bill would expand the capacity of Maryland to offer a truly world-class education to *all* students.

If you have questions or requests for additional information, you can email:

Shamoyia Gardiner

Executive Director

shamoyia@strongschoolsmaryland.org

MEC testimony -HB 850.pdf

Uploaded by: Sue Fothergill

Position: FAV



Maryland Education Coalition



Shanetta Martin & Sue Fothergill, Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org

Email – md.education.coaliton@gmail.com

Date: March 3, 2022

BILL: HB 850

POSITION: SUPPORT

COMMITTEE: [Ways and Means](#)

TITLE: Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education – Discrimination

[The Maryland Education Coalition \(MEC\)](#) supports HB 850- Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education – Discrimination – Prohibition. This bill would prohibit any public or nonpublic Prekindergarten program or school receiving public funds from discriminating or penalize persons who file complaints from discrimination defined within several classifications consistent with MEC's position described below. It will codify anti-discrimination practices with reporting, review, and accountability measures. HB 850 will also require programs to maintain a written anti-discrimination policy, consistent with the public education requirements and MEC's standing position on discrimination (see below), while protecting students, staff and families and guardians from retaliation due to discipline related issues and provides an avenue to file complaints.

MEC supports public-private partnership of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and other early intervention programs, but they must be for all children in Maryland with priority access to economically disadvantaged students and students with the greatest risk of falling behind during the early years. We also believe that Pre-school education programs must be coordinated with state approved child-care and other services as needed. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be fully funded and fully implemented to ensure appropriate interventions for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

MEC Position on Discrimination - MEC opposes discrimination against staff, students, parents/guardians or visitors by age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, language, marital status, mental ability, national origin, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, or work experience. This position applies to any public or private program that receives public funds.

MEC is the oldest, largest, most diverse and experience group of public education advocates in Maryland with a long history of success support of all students in Maryland from Pre-K to 12th grade committed to working collaboratively with the General Assembly, Maryland Education and child-support professionals to ensure that all children in Maryland have access to quality public education and student services that will allow them to graduate college or career-ready.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report of HB 850.

Respectfully yours,

Shanetta Martin & Sue Fothergill, Co-Chairs

American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children's Behavioral Health Coalition, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Right to Read Maryland, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, MSC-NAACP, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Shanetta Martin, Sharon Rubinstein, Rick Tyler, Jr.

AIMD Testimony - Inclusive Schools Act - House 202

Uploaded by: Ariel Sadwin

Position: UNF



HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

MARCH 3, 2022

HOUSE BILL 850

SCHOOLS, PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS, AND COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION – DISCRIMINATION OPPOSE

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland and on behalf of the 10,000 students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state.

As it is the key to the future of society, the education of our children is the item held in the highest regard by our citizenry. Among certain groups, *where* one goes to acquire an education may be just as important as the education itself. Many communities whose members share a religious, cultural, or social bond, are compelled to educate their children within the atmosphere created to maintain the traditions of their beliefs. It is upon this foundation that Jewish day schools operate within our state, as well as the hundreds of other faith-based nonpublic schools.

The Jewish day school community, and the broader nonpublic school community, strongly supports the continuous record-setting funding of Maryland's public education system, and applaud its great success and historic accomplishments educating Maryland's youth. However, nonpublic schools serve as a vital option for those who choose an education provided within their religious or cultural community.

We are ever grateful for the funds allocated over the last many years by the Maryland General Assembly to provide a small measure of support to eligible and participating schools and to the families who choose them. The requisite tuition is a great burden to the majority of the families (a high percentage of whom are FARMs eligible), but they are willing to make sacrifices in order for their child to have an education that allows for them to maintain their cultural and religious identity.

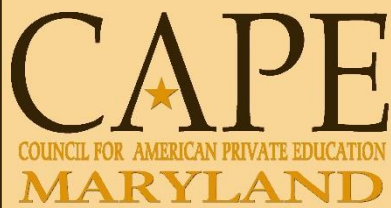
House Bill 850 seeks to impose unprecedented restrictions upon the operations of these schools. By making any available state funding hinge upon admission and retention policies covering such a far-reaching range of categories puts the foundation of parochial education under serious and unprovoked threat. In order to participate in any of Maryland's state funded programs, nonpublic schools already sign assurances put into place to ensure that discrimination on grounds of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity does not take place. The additional anti-discrimination policies presented in House Bill 850 go far beyond those requirements and present insurmountable challenges that are not culturally or fiscally sustainable for nearly any of the participating nonpublic schools.

We ask you to please consider the nonpublic school community and the 120,000 students that are educated within it, to maintain the previously accepted anti-discrimination language in the state budget that does not allow discrimination on the aforementioned grounds. We urge you to report unfavorably on House Bill 850. Thank you.

MDCAPE Testimony 2022 HB 850 Discrim.pdf

Uploaded by: Ariel Sadwin

Position: UNF



**Maryland's Voice for
Nonpublic Education**

RABBI ARIEL SADWIN
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MARYLAND HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

MARCH 3, 2022

HOUSE BILL 850

**SCHOOLS, PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS, AND COUNTY BOARDS
OF EDUCATION – DISCRIMINATION**

OPPOSE

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of roughly 120,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

In representing the interests of the nonpublic schools, Maryland CAPE has endless appreciation for the state programs that have benefited our schools and the families who have chosen these schools for their children's education. The state funded programs that are accessed by the nonpublic school community range from the purchase of school textbooks and curriculum to the purchase and installation of vital security components that ensures the safety of our students in a very dangerous world. Other funds have gone to update and maintain the aging facilities of nonpublic schools. Over the last few years, thousands of low-income children from across the state – a majority of which are from minority communities – have been given the opportunity to choose a nonpublic school using the BOOST scholarship that they received.

If House Bill 850 were to pass, creating a whole new slate of requirements for schools – public and nonpublic – the above programs that assist nonpublic schools will be put in peril. Moreover, the entire platform of nonpublic education will be put into an unprecedented position facing challenges never considered anywhere in the country. The nonpublic school community is mostly made up of faith-based schools which are guided by policies and provisions that are thousands of years old. They are not items that are put into place by the administration of a specific school. The policies, beliefs, and philosophies that are taught and upheld in these schools have always been protected by the free-exercise clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

We ask you to ensure that these protections remain and to please report unfavorably on House Bill 850.

MD Catholic Conference_UNFAV_HB 850.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: UNF



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 3, 2022

**HB 850
Schools, Prekindergarten Programs, and County Boards of Education -
Discrimination**

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony on behalf of the families of approximately 50,000 students served by more than 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland in OPPOSITION to House Bill 850. The Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 850 places requirements on public and nonpublic schools that are not currently in law and frustrate day-to-day operational practicalities in both educational forums. It does not define “discrimination”, making for an overbroad and vague concept within the bill.

This bill is also unnecessary relative to nonpublic schools, as stringent and effective nondiscrimination protections already placed in state programs for those schools and they are working. This bill is a clear attempt to challenge conscience protections for faith-based schools participating in state programs. Catholic schools have complied with all state and federal nondiscrimination provisions and comply with every requirement already placed up them through state-funded programs.

Additionally, creating “disability” as a protected class against “discrimination” does not account for the fact that not all schools, whether public or nonpublic, can accommodate each student, as to do so would be to the student’s detriment if a school was not equipped to accommodate them. In fact, public schools that cannot accommodate students with particular disabilities often have to place those students with nonpublic providers.

Lastly, this bill does not provide First Amendment Free Exercise Clause protections for nonpublic schools, of which the majority are faith-based. This bill could unconstitutionally force many faith-based schools to abandon exceptions for religious entities already placed in law by forcing them to choose between participating in an otherwise available state benefit for their students or remaining a religious institution. The exception for religion in the bill is merely curriculum-related and wholly insufficient.

The majority of states in the U.S. provide assistance for nonpublic school students and families. However, other state programs do not subject schools to requirements such as those put

forth by House Bill 850. Moreover, since 1965, the federal Elementary and Secondary School Act (n/k/a the Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA) has provided for the equitable inclusion of nonpublic school students in federal education programs without imposing government regulations like those promulgated by House Bill 850.

This legislation will deprive children, many of them from minority, low-income families, of the benefits of state programs that make their school day better and more productive. This bill is detrimental to more than 80,000 of the 120,000 preK-12 nonpublic school students in the state whose schools are eligible for the longstanding Nonpublic Student Textbook Program (approximately 400 schools), and nearly 200 schools that participate in the DeGrange Nonpublic Aging Schools Program. To even greater detriment, the bill would effectively take away scholarships from thousands of FARMs-eligible, low-income, state scholarship recipients, the majority of who are minorities and/or English language learners.

For each of the aforementioned reasons, we request this committee to report unfavorably on House Bill 850.