

Maryland Catholic Conference_FWA_HB461A.pdf

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MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

April 4, 2023

House Bill 461

Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex
Trafficking

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 461 requires the State Board of Education, and certain nonpublic schools to develop and implement age-appropriate educational programming on awareness and prevention of human trafficking, sex trafficking, sexual abuse, and assault.

Promoting awareness about the realities of human trafficking and sex trafficking is essential in the fight to combat human trafficking. Maryland is uniquely positioned to be a "hot spot" for human trafficking activity, due to the interstate highways that run through it, its proximity to numerous large cities, and its ports of call and major international airports. Unfortunately, few Marylanders are aware of the presence of trafficking in the state, leaving traffickers hidden and children more vulnerable to exploitation.

Education and awareness are critical for the prevention of human trafficking. However, since human trafficking is such a specialized field, it is crucial that ***experts in the field of human trafficking and those with direct experience working with survivors should be involved in the development of the curriculum.*** Since new research and best practices regarding human trafficking are continuously evolving, ***the curriculum should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is reflective of the most recent knowledge of human trafficking. It is also recommended that any curriculum address both sex and labor trafficking.*** Additionally, any ***education on trafficking should include education on the safe and healthy use of technology and online communications to avoid violence and exploitation and education on healthy and non-violent relationships.***

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report with amendments on **HB 461**. Thank you for your consideration.

Trafficking - education - house in senate testimon

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FWA



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 461 with Amendments
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
April 4, 2023

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Education, Energy & Environment Committee to report favorably on House Bill 461 with Amendments

House Bill 461

Sexual Abuse & Assault Awareness and Prevention Program, Human and Sex Trafficking

This bill adds education about "human and sex trafficking" to the currently mandated curricula on awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The current mandate provides broad guidance at the state level, with additional community specific information developed locally. MCASA and many of its member rape crisis centers across the state have been involved in developing the current sexual abuse and assault prevention curricula; notably, this generally also includes information on consent.

Providing students with information regarding trafficking is an important component of prevention. Stopping the horrific crimes of trafficking must continue to be the responsibility of adults, not children, however education can help empower children and promote resilience. Including age-appropriate information regarding sex trafficking would fit well in current curricula regarding sexual abuse and assault and regarding consent. It is less clear whether labor trafficking would fit into this education and MCASA encourages the Committee to provide local schools flexibility on this point. Additionally, we express concern at limiting the trafficking education to students between 6th and 8th grade. These are smaller details, however, and MCASA fully supports HB461's larger goal of ensuring that students receive information about sex trafficking as part of their education. MCASA also supports the bill provisions requiring that teachers providing this education have the training they need to be effective, and notes that MCASA and other agencies are available to assist with efforts to train educators.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Education, Energy & Environment Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 461 with Amendments**

HB 461 Crossover_ Education - Sexual Abuse and Ass

Uploaded by: Alexa Thomas

Position: UNF



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 461

TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program
- Human and Sex Trafficking

DATE: April 4, 2023

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four Maryland local school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 461.

House Bill 461 requires the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE) to develop an age-appropriate education program modeling awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault for use in public schools and certain nonpublic schools. The program would be required to include material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking geared towards students in grades six through eight. Each local board of education would be required to incorporate this education program into already existing health curriculum, as well as ensure that instruction of these topics would be provided by teachers trained in the instruction of sexual assault prevention and awareness.

PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing efforts by the General Assembly to codify curriculum standards, assessments, or graduation requirements. Local superintendents strongly believe that the role of curriculum development and implementation belongs solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE. Rest assured, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating revisions to content standards and curriculum.

The Maryland General Assembly, in creating the Maryland State Board of Education and local boards of education, has delegated to them the responsibility of delivering a high-quality statewide system of public education through State standards and accountability measures, as well as locally governed and administered curriculum. The State Board establishes State content

frameworks, state assessment standards, and minimum state graduation requirements, while each local board and school system implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that the state content frameworks are followed, student performance standards are met, and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements.

In the context of educational programming proposed by House Bill 461, PSSAM emphasizes that many local school systems already incorporate age-appropriate materials on topics such as sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention into comprehensive health education curriculum. Under current law, each local school system must provide a comprehensive health education program for all students from prekindergarten through grade eight, as well as offer an education program in grades 9 through 12 that enables students to meet graduation requirements. Superintendents are committed to providing students with a comprehensive, well-rounded health education through curriculum that is implemented after proper stakeholder input is received and review processes are completed in each individual system. However, seeing as though this bill would require all local systems to expend additional funds in curriculum and assessment creation that are not provided under the bill's current language, this bill serves as an unfunded mandate for all twenty-four local systems.

Again, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on the merits of instruction pertaining to the sexual abuse, assault awareness, and sex trafficking prevention. Rather, it rests on the implications of curricular mandates on local school systems. House Bill 461, alongside similar bills which seek to interject or extract piecemeal segments of the curriculum, only serve to weaken the effectiveness of the overall educational curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 461 and urges an unfavorable committee report.

FINAL HB461 Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: UNF



HB461 EDUCATION – SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM – HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING

April 4, 2023

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB461 Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking**. This bill requires the Maryland State Board of Education and nonpublic schools that hold a certificate of approval from the State Board and participate in the Nonpublic Schools Textbook and Technology Grants Program to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness of sexual abuse and assault that includes, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

Maryland schools provide their students with a comprehensive prekindergarten – 12 health education curriculum that focuses on a student’s development of protective life skills and promotes health and well-being. As part of this comprehensive health education curriculum, AACPS students are educated in Family Life and Human Sexuality as well as Safety and Violence Prevention. Students participate in age-appropriate instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. This instruction includes age-appropriate education on the meaning of consent and respect for personal boundaries.

While this legislation is well-intentioned, AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public school curriculum or assessments. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and local boards of education, the same entities charged with researching, investigating, and evaluating both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

AACPS is committed to an ongoing and thorough review of curricula and materials of instruction to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are promoted and evident. AACPS has a committee that reviews curriculum and materials of instruction. Representatives from all stakeholder groups including parents/guardians, teachers, and students are included in the review process.

Again, AACPS’s opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching a particular subject matter, but rather the school system’s opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of one concept of content item as was as the opposition of unfunded mandates.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB461.

HB 461.Human Sex Trafficking Curriculum Mandate- S

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF

BILL: House Bill 461
TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking
DATE: April 4, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 461, which would require that the age-appropriate education program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault developed and implemented by the State Board of Education and each nonpublic school would include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

Local boards of education are committed to providing programs of instruction, health services, school facilities, and school meals designed to promote the physical and mental health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults. In this light, MABE appreciates the intent of this bill, but opposes adopting a specific student health instruction standard in this manner.

As this committee knows, MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board. Although MABE agrees that human trafficking awareness and prevention education is a valuable component to comprehensive school health education programs, MABE maintains a strong preference for the adoption of State standards and the local discretion to achieve those standards through locally adopted curriculum and instructional tools and practices.

Again, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, certainly not education about human trafficking, but rather on the association's opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of any one concept or content item.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 461.

HB0461 Howard Co BOE Testimony 040423 for EEE - Se

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 4, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Antonia Watts, *Chair*

Yun Lu, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Jolene Mosley

Abisola Ayoola
Student Member

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

**HB0461: UNFAVORABLE
Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program -
Human and Sex Trafficking**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking** as a mandate on local school system curriculum.

While well-intentioned, HB0461 mandates the content of Health Education curriculum, by requiring that a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault include material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking in grades 6 through 8. As a legislative platform the Board supports local decision making in the development of curriculum that accounts for a balance of educational practices, available resources, public input, and accountability that is informed and guided by State Board established standards and models, rather than legislative mandates as encompassed in HB0461.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) provides a comprehensive Health Education program that aligns to State curriculum standards and focuses on a student's development of protective life skills and promotes health and well-being. Topics such as sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, and exploitation are currently included in HCPSS curriculum at all three levels. While Howard County has included human trafficking specifically in middle school curriculum for several years, it was also recently added to the State Health Education framework in grade 7.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of HB0461 from this Committee.