



## WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

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02/15/2023

House Judiciary Committee  
Attn: Hon. Delegate / Chairman Luke Clippinger  
Room 101  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: MD 2023 HB 666 Family Law – Fundamental Parental Rights

Delegate / Chairman Clippinger & House Judiciary Committee Members,

Please accept this as a letter of support for *MD 2023 HB 666 Family Law – Fundamental Parental Rights*.

As a teacher of 17 years in the Wicomico County Public School System, a current parent, and now County Executive of Wicomico County, I was appalled by the comment made by Terry McAuliffe, candidate for the Governor of Virginia, when he stated parents should not have a say in what their children should be taught. This very statement was one of the reasons I decided to run for County Executive. During Covid, when schools were shut down, we witnessed so many children who suffered from learning loss and mental health issues. It was then that many parents realized that they could no longer take a backseat to their child's education.

During my time as a candidate for County Executive and now an elected official, I continually hear parents voicing their concerns about their child's education and their concerns with the education system as a whole. I have repeatedly reminded those parents that their voices matter when it comes to their child's education and I would represent them in Annapolis.

The fact that the state of Maryland does not protect parental rights as a fundamental right is concerning. I applaud Senator Ready and Delegate Miller for sponsoring this bill and I am very proud to support it. Protecting parental rights is imperative as the parent and/or guardian is a viable entity to any child's education.

In 2013, our neighboring state of Virginia, passed legislation which recognizes parent's fundamental right to make decisions regarding the upbringing, education, and care of their children. I think Maryland should follow suit. In the words of Winsome Sears, Virginia's Lieutenant Governor, "*they better start listening to parents because... children do belong to the parents, not the state. We are the ones who will decide what our children should learn... Powers that be keep pinning people against each other, the rich against the poor... Black against White, et cetera, in an effort to divide us. I don't know to what end, but it's not going to work because ultimately parents want to ensure that their children are learning. That's the whole thing.*"

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report for *MD 2023 HB 666 Family Law – Fundamental Parental Rights*.

Thank You,



Julie M. Giordano  
Wicomico County Executive