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February 22, 2023

HB 0576 - Primary and Secondary Education - Policies on Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Revisions

Position: FAVORABLE

Annapolis Pride's mission is to advocate for, empower, and celebrate our LGBTQ+ community in Anne Arundel County to live fully and authentically. Our vision is a safe, equitable, and anti-racist community where people of all identities thrive.

As such, the Board of Directors of Annapolis Pride enthusiastically supports House Bill 576, which provides more comprehensive protections for students who experience bullying, harassment, or intimidation. By allowing victim's to make the decision of notifying their parents or guardians in situations of bullying or harassment, we ensure that victims are given full autonomy of their own safety and wellbeing. This policy will ensure that victims are not ashamed or blamed for the actions of their perpetrators.

Schools are considered a safe space for many students, as such schools should not release information regarding a student's sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. to their parents unless the student has explicitly requested that their parents be informed. By taking steps to protect student's privacy rights, schools can create a safe, supportive environment where students can feel comfortable exploring their identity without fear of judgment or discrimination.

For these reasons, Annapolis Pride respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 576.