

March 7, 2023
House Bill 1202

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of House 1202 that would require the posting of curriculum and instructional materials used at public schools on the public schools' website; and establishing requirements for the production and inspection of certain instructional materials referenced in certain curriculum. I am Tara Thompson from Moms 4 Liberty Baltimore County, and I am here today to speak about why a bill to require transparency of public school classroom materials is critical for Maryland families and taxpayers.

The majority of Maryland students attend a K-12 public school in our state. For many families and students, their local public school is an integral part of their community and a pivotal place for student growth. But the pandemic provided parents a peek into the classroom and for far too many families, concerns about curriculum, classroom topics and activities were put on their radar. And when families reached out to their school leaders and school boards, their effort to access information was stonewalled despite Maryland's historical legal and public policy preference for taxpayers' access to public records.

This is not a new phenomenon. Parents have been raising concerns about curriculum materials for public school students for decades. For example, there have been debates on the use of Common Core, the teaching of health education and reading, among countless other subjects. Without a doubt, curriculum discussions will continue in the future. House Bill 1202 is a smart public policy proposal that addresses parental concerns today and in the future. Curriculum transparency is needed to ensure that parents, families, taxpayers, and lawmakers can know exactly what is being taught in the classroom.

As the debates over curriculum and classroom materials has exploded over the past 2 school years, parents were often locked out of the discussion. All too often, parents have gone to school leaders about the materials their children were learning in the classroom, yet school boards and administrators simply claim that certain topics were not taught. This has created an on-going debate that divided communities. At the heart of these disputes is the difficulty for parents to access the materials being taught in the classroom. We have had many parents come to our organization with this concern. We have also had several families pull their children for homeschooling in response to a lack of transparency curriculum.

Public school districts and their employees, including teachers, are entities that implement government speech. When materials are created by public school teachers and used in the classroom, parents, as well as taxpayers, have every right to access the materials.

Therefore, the classroom materials in public school districts should be made accessible to the public.

Taxpayers have a right to know how our tax dollars are being spent. Government schools – public schools – are not exempt from this requirement. HB 1202 provides critical access to the classroom to inform parents and taxpayers how our government is implementing education. Expanding transparency and letting the sunlight into the classroom will help rebuild our communities and ultimately, empower parents to work with teachers in the classroom.

Thank you for your time.

Warm Regards,

Tara Thompson

Chapter Chair

[Moms for Liberty - Baltimore County](#)

M4lbaltimorecountymd@gmail.com