

HB558 Unfavorable

As a voter, taxpayer, parent, and former teacher, I want you to know that Marylanders do not support HB558. This year, just like last year, parents' voices are strongly against this bill. Many felt that supporting this bill disqualified our former Superintendent to serve in Maryland. Each Maryland School District has its own needs and priorities.

Local schools and school boards need flexibility to meet the needs of the diverse students in our state. They know the students and their backgrounds and cultures. The state school board does not.

Disallowing parental opt-out is extreme and culturally insensitive. The result of this bill would be more students dropping out of public school because of the school system's lack of understanding and respect for their diverse cultures. Parents, not state curriculum committees, have the Constitutional right to direct the upbringing of their children.

HB558 is unnecessary and would be a detriment to culturally-informed education.

I don't want to see the state take over our high-performing schools or see our dedicated teachers and school board silenced.

The bill would create a hostile relationship between the state vs local school boards and superintendents and give the unelected state school board and superintendent way too much control.

Incidentally, Senator Lam who sponsored the bill last year, stated in a committee hearing about HB119 "If it doesn't pass, that's fine." So no one should feel any pressure to support the bill.

I urge you to do the right thing and give this bill an unfavorable report.