

Oppose HB 558

It is obvious that the bill aims to broadly expand health services in schools. Worse, it simultaneously strives to reduce or eliminate parental knowledge or involvement. The Framework diminishes the importance of parents, for example it states "family is a group of people that support each other." This is a state ideology, not based on any traditional values, that tries to replace parents with "trusted adults."

Parents must be involved whether they agree with the action or not. Parents are the foundational support in healthy families and provide strong support to growing children. School systems that exclude parents on the premise of protecting student privacy as it relates to mental or emotional health are violating parental rights and legal obligations. However, schools are not responsible for any negative consequences of their "frameworks." It would be parents who must deal with any consequences.

Thus, if parents want to opt out of de-facto mental health services provided by schools, they should be able to do so freely. There are multiple cultures, and among them there are strong differences of opinions on the issues of gender expression, sexual orientation and romantic attraction. Every culture, tradition, or family looks differently at such topics and at what age those are appropriate. The traditional values protect children from the chaos and temptations of free and diverse societies. It is the traditional values that grown children and young adults learn to lean on during difficult times. Schools must not subvert those values by forcing some arbitrary framework across the board.

The mandatory topics, along with goals and grading, force a one-size-fits-all approach on such a very sensitive subject. There is no intent to protect children's modesty or innocence. If not taught by parents, these topics should be taught by highly skilled therapists. How will schools find so many qualified instructors for such a comprehensive program? In addition, the topics are heavily influenced by the medical/pharmaceutical industry and predispose children to blind trust in the industry's services and interventions.

I strongly urge you to oppose the bill.

Sincerely,
Mark Meyerovich
Gaithersburg, MD