

HB 553/SB 438: Family Law - Fundamental Parental Rights: Please SUPPORT this important legislation!!

Dear **Judiciary** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and all other Esteemed Committee Members, AND **Judicial Proceedings** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and all other Esteemed Committee Members:

Regardless of your politics, for those of us with children, we are PARENTS first. We are the people that love our children the most. We want what is best for our children. We want our children to grow up to be happy, healthy and productive adults. We want our children to contribute positively to society. We, as parents, know our children the best.

NOT governmental agencies, NOT government officials.

This is a very important bill to anyone who is a PARENT first. This bill states:

"...Establishing that a parent has the fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of the parent's child; and prohibiting the State or a political subdivision from infringing on a parent's fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of the parent's child unless the State or political subdivision can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence certain factors..."

Please review the below points of why I am asking all of you to support this bill, especially the last point:

- This bill upholds the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of their children, which have been under attack this session and in previous sessions in other proposed legislation.
- Parents are tax-paying citizens and have the right to engage in civic participation in the development and implementation of any and all public school programs and any and all curricula.
- Parents have the fundamental right to direct and to refuse any medical treatments, procedures, interventions or vaccinations, etc. which might be administered to their students in school settings or in pharmacies.

- Parents must retain the fundamental right to discover and direct the care of their children while those children are attending school, including the full content of information to which the children are exposed, and any medical treatment, procedure, intervention, or vaccination, etc., including mental health care, administered.
- Parents demonstrably have the highest vested interest in their children's welfare and are best equipped to make important decisions for their children regarding their care.
- The state provides remedies for rare cases in which children are living in circumstances of abuse and neglect. There is no context in which it's necessary or appropriate for the state legislature to pass laws that undermine or usurp the authority of all parents, the vast majority of whom provide much better care and decision-making for their children than the state is capable of providing.
- The Supreme Court ruled in 1979: "Most children, even in adolescence, simply are not able to make sound judgments concerning many decisions, including their need for medical care or treatment. Parents can and must make those judgments."

I'm sure that we can all agree that the medical records of a child should never be kept hidden from that child's parents! Many adverse reactions from vaccinations, medications, etc. take weeks or longer to appear. If a child starts having a seizure, when that child had no previous medical history of seizures, it would be crucial for the parents to know what product was given to their child and when. This could be the difference between life and death for that child. The parents and their children's physicians should be the ones collaborating on what is best for the child, NOT government officials who have never treated the child. Government officials do not have the vast amount of medical information and background about the child that the parents and the child's physicians do and, therefore, cannot make the best decisions for a child.

Also, we as parents are protected by law to handle the moral and religious upbringing of our children. We the parents should be making the decisions as to what types of materials are used in the classroom and for educational projects or assignments, including what types of books our children are exposed to and at what ages. If we as parents do not want pornographic or obscene material to be available to our children or assigned for our children

to read or review, then we the parents have the right to make that call, NOT government officials or teachers. We are legally protected in our religious teachings to our children. And when our religious and spiritual teachings are in conflict with any material that is presented to our children in school, we the parents have the right to decide if that material is appropriate for our children. If we the parents decide that any material is not appropriate for our children, we the parents have the right to have the "assignment" changed to what we the parents do agree is appropriate for our children.

These are simple requests that we the parents are making. And we the parents have the fundamental right to make them.

Thank you again for SUPPORTING this bill. I will feel much safer for my children and ALL children when this bill is passed!

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother and Resident of Maryland