mnadv
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

BILL NO: House Bill 558
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework - Established
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
HEARING DATE: February 7, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 558.**

House Bill 558 would require the State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to develop a comprehensive health education framework. This framework must include certain topics including safety and violence prevention. The bill also requires a committee review and comments on the curriculum.

The ultimate objective for MNADV is to prevent intimate partner violence from occurring rather than intervening once it has already occurred. A multi-pronged approach must be employed to achieve this goal including education on healthy relationships in schools. The CDC states that "[s]ocial-emotional learning programs for youth promote expectations for mutually respectful, caring, non-violent relationships among young people and work with youth to help them develop social-emotional skills such as empathy, respect, and healthy communication and conflict resolution skills."[1]

The comprehensive health education framework requires that there be education on healthy and non-violent relationships. MNADV believes that HB 558 is an important step towards the goal of the primary prevention of domestic violence.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB 558.**

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[1] https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf