

SB: 1032/HB 1400: Public Schools - Student Use of Force -
Authorization: Please SUPPORT this bill!!

Dear Ways & Means committee Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and all other esteemed Committee Members:

I strongly urge you to SUPPORT this bill!!

Public Schools have become a dangerous place to attend in today's world. There is bullying, both verbal and physical, as well as physical fights that break out daily in some schools. Thank God we have our SROs (Student Resource Officers) in our public schools. SROs have saved countless student lives across the country.

Sadly, though, sometimes SROs could arrive too late. SROs are assigned to more than one school, so, unfortunately, they cannot be in every school at all times. Sometimes, sadly enough, students must try to defend themselves from physical fights and attacks.

That is where this bill becomes not only relevant but **necessary**. The bill states: "FOR the purpose of authorizing a student to take reasonable action necessary to prevent violence...including intervening in a fight or physical struggle that takes place in his or her presence, whether the fight is among students or other individuals." This bill allows students to prevent violence from occurring, which could be a huge safety factor, as well as a deterrent for individuals from initiating fights. It also states "...authorizing a student to use reasonable force necessary to protect themselves or escape an attack...The degree and force of the intervention may be as reasonably necessary to prevent violence, restore order and to protect the safety of the combatants and surrounding individuals." A very vital part of this bill allows students to defend themselves or escape an attack as the situation dictates and as the need arises, which is **vital** to the safety of the students. This way students can defend themselves and protect nearby individuals from getting severely hurt. This bill also states "...requiring the principal or school administration to investigate each student use of force incident..." Another great part of this bill is that it also requires school administrators to investigate each reported incident, so that the facts of the incident can be determined. This bill also states "...prohibiting a school employee from disciplining a student under certain circumstances..." And lastly, this bill prohibits any school personnel from disciplining the involved students who have used necessary force to defend and protect themselves and anyone else in danger from an incident. This is very important, so that students know that they

will not be wrongly punished for defending and protecting themselves and any bystanders that are close to the occurrence.

This is a very comprehensive bill that allows students to protect themselves and anyone nearby that might be in danger from a violent occurrence, as well as protects the students from being punished for such necessary actions. We cannot be too safe with our students, teachers, support personnel, and administrators, as well as any visitors to our schools. Our number one concern for and responsibility to anyone inside any public school building is to keep them safe. This bill will allow the State of Maryland to live up to that responsibility.

Thank you for your courtesy and cooperation in SUPPORTING this very important legislation.

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother and Maryland Resident