



Testimony

HB1400 Public Schools Student Use of Force Authorization

Sponsor: Delegate Tomlinson

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-lead

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1400 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

A student who is physically attacked on school property or at a school activity needs to be able to protect themselves. AND the student should not be disciplined for doing so afterwards. Our coalition believes the statutes that pertain to self-defense should also apply to children and adolescents.

HB1400 authorizes students to take reasonable action necessary not only to protect themselves but also prevent other violence. After a requisite investigation, a student should not be disciplined for such reasonable actions.

This legislation is important as more assaults and weapons are reported at schools. The subsequent investigation by the school administration into the event, as required by this legislation, will prevent misuse of this law, and likely clear the student victim of wrongdoing.

HB1400 aims to strike a balance between safety and empowering students to protect themselves and others within reasonable bounds. For this reason, we support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.