



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Elementary and Secondary Education -
Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

Bill Number(s): [HJ0005/SJ0005](#)

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

Date: February 27, 2025

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the
Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

The Hon. Anne Healey, Chair
The Hon. Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Hon. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected.

The Commission strongly supports HJ0005/SJ0005, which recognizes the importance of teaching a diverse and inclusive curriculum in Maryland's elementary and secondary schools. A complete education must reflect the full breadth of our history, including the experiences of communities that have faced discrimination. When students see themselves and their communities represented in the classroom, they are more likely to feel engaged, valued, and empowered to succeed. At the same time, all students benefit from learning about the diverse experiences, histories, and contributions of different communities, helping to build a society rooted in understanding, empathy, and respect. This resolution affirms Maryland's commitment to an education system that prepares young people to thrive in an increasingly diverse world.

The [2021 GLSEN National School Climate Survey](#) reveals that LGBTQ students who attend school with an LGBTQIA+-inclusive curriculum reported decreased instances of biased language, increased GPAs, higher levels of self-esteem, decreased levels of depression, and increased interest in post-secondary education. Despite these benefits, GLSEN reports only

26.7% of LGBTQIA+ youth in Maryland were taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events.

To strengthen this resolution, we respectfully propose a friendly amendment to explicitly include "gender identity or expression" alongside the other identities listed. Transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse youth face significant barriers to inclusion in schools, including higher rates of bullying, academic disengagement, and mental health challenges. Ensuring that gender identity and expression are recognized within curricula will help counter misinformation and foster a learning environment where all students can see their identities reflected and respected. By including gender expression, we ensure that this resolution also protects individuals who are perceived as gender diverse, regardless of their gender identity. Maryland has made great strides in advancing LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and this amendment ensures that the resolution fully aligns with our state's values of equity and belonging.

We commend the sponsors of HJ0005/SJ0005 for their leadership in advancing an education system that reflects the diversity of Maryland's students. This resolution is a crucial step toward fostering a more inclusive and informed learning environment for all young people. We urge the committees to support its passage with the recommended amendment.

References:

GLSEN. (2022). *The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools*. Retrieved from <https://www.glsen.org/research/2021-national-school-climate-survey>