

Favorable Written Testimony on Senate Joint Resolution 5

To: The Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Brenda Myers

Date: 03/05/2025

Re: Support for Senate Joint Resolution 5 – "Elementary and Secondary Education – Curriculum – Importance of Diversity"

Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I write today to express my **strong support** for Senate Joint Resolution 5 (SJ 5), which affirms the importance of a **culturally diverse curriculum in Maryland's elementary and secondary schools**. This resolution is a vital step toward ensuring that **all students receive an inclusive, accurate, and comprehensive education that reflects the rich diversity of our state**.

1. SJ 5 Promotes an Accurate and Inclusive Curriculum

The resolution acknowledges that **Maryland's current curricula have historically underrepresented the histories and contributions of communities that have experienced discrimination**. It is essential that students learn about **the struggles, achievements, and lived experiences of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups** to foster a deeper understanding of our shared history and society.

By **incorporating diverse perspectives** into education, SJ 5 supports the creation of **historically accurate, well-rounded curricula** that prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens.

2. SJ 5 Encourages Critical Thinking and Empathy

Studies have shown that **exposure to diverse perspectives in education enhances critical thinking skills, cultivates empathy, and reduces bias**. When students learn about the experiences of **historically marginalized groups**, they are more likely to develop **compassion, civic awareness, and the ability to engage in meaningful cross-cultural dialogue**. This resolution reinforces **Maryland's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and respectful society**.

3. SJ 5 Strengthens Maryland's Commitment to Equity and Representation

This resolution underscores Maryland's **dedication to educational equity** by ensuring that curricula reflect the realities of **all communities, including those discriminated against based on disability, ethnicity, gender, indigenous affiliation, race, religion, or sexual**

orientation. Representation in education is **not just about history—it is about ensuring that all students see themselves reflected in what they learn.**

4. SJ 5 Aligns with National and State Educational Standards

The goals of this resolution align with **best practices recommended by educational organizations nationwide**, including the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Historical Association (AHA). Many states have **already implemented policies supporting diverse curricula**, and Maryland has the opportunity to **lead by example** in promoting a curriculum that prepares students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

5. SJ 5 Strengthens Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion

A well-rounded education that includes diverse histories helps build a **stronger, more unified community**. Understanding the past—including the injustices faced by marginalized groups—empowers students to become **engaged, informed citizens** who contribute positively to society. This resolution supports the development of a more informed electorate, ensuring that future generations have the knowledge necessary to uphold **democracy, justice, and human rights**.

Conclusion

Senate Joint Resolution 5 is a necessary and forward-thinking measure that:

- **Promotes an accurate and inclusive curriculum** reflecting the histories of all communities.
- **Fosters critical thinking, empathy, and civic engagement** among students.
- **Ensures representation in education** for historically marginalized groups.
- **Aligns with best practices in education** and strengthens Maryland's commitment to equity.
- **Prepares students for success in a diverse and interconnected society.**

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on SJ 5.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brenda Myers

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