Written Testimony for <mark>HB 161</mark>: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework - Established: Please **VOTE NO** on this legislation!!

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I cannot urge you strongly enough to OPPOSE this bill!!

As a mother, my first and foremost duty is to protect my children. I take this duty very seriously.

I do not agree with the Primary and Secondary Comprehensive Health Education Framework including the topics of Mental and Emotional Health and Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation.

Firstly, as a parent, there are no specifics and to what is included in either topic. Therefore, as a parent, I cannot determine whether my children should participate in these lessons. How could any parent determine that?

Secondly, these topics should be "Opt-in", not "Opt-out". Mental Health is important, but it is not something that should be taught at our Public Schools. Public Schools should be teaching academic subjects that will help our students become college and career ready!! The more we focus on mental health, that's all anyone will ever think about. What about students actually being concerned about learning academics and having them concentrate on that? That is why they attend school, after all. When I attended school in Maryland public schools, no one ever asked any of the students how we felt about everything under the sun. We were supposed to focus on our classes. No one ever asked us any questions about our mental health. So we never concentrated on it!! We concentrated on our classes, and we excelled academically!!

Why are we attempting to put into law subjects that are NOT academic and subjects that many parents will disagree with? Many parents do not believe that Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation and Mental Health should be taught in school and do not want their children exposed to these topics, for a variety of reasons. We should respect the parents' rights and that the parents know their children best, and if the parents do not want these subjects taught to their children, we either should not be teaching these topics, or we should let the parents opt their children out of these topics.

Gender identity and sexual orientation should not be taught in public schools at all. "Gender identity" is an ideology that is currently being debated around the world. Gender dysphoria is a mental illness that is listed in the most recent DSM that psychiatrists use to diagnose mental health illnesses. Would Gender dysphoria be taught as well? Would we teach that many European countries have decided to pull away from the approach that "affirms" a minor's "gender identity" confusion and that those countries have decided that a "wait and see" approach is much better for the minor child instead? Will we also teach that many European countries will not treat gender dysphoria in minors with any medical treatment but with traditional psychotherapy instead? Will we teach that most minors that go through puberty will return to their "gender" at birth? Will we teach that many religions do not believe in gender ideology and that minor children are simply "born in the wrong body"? What will we teach when we realize and accept that too many of our students follow those same religions that do not believe or accept gender ideology? Will we teach these students that their deeply held beliefs are wrong?

There are too many medical and mental health professionals that disagree with gender identity and gender dysphoria to teach it in our public schools. If Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation must be taught at all, these subjects should be **"opt-in" only**, not "opt-out". If mental health is taught, is it being taught by a teacher or a qualified mental health professional that is not employed by the school system, so as to remove any potential biases?

As you can see, there are too many questionable and unanswered variables for a public school system to be teaching these subjects.

 Please **VOTE NO** on this bill!! Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals
A Very Concerned Mother and Maryland resident