

Wellspring Christian Family Schools

Formerly Walkersville Christian Family Schools

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"God forbid that I should forsake the inheritance of my Fathers." (1 Kings 21:3)



March 5, 2025

The Maryland Senate

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Honorable Chair, Senator Brian J. Feldman

Honorable Vice Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan

Members of the Committee

Re: SB0916-Maryland "Educate to Stop the Hate" Act; Favorable with Amendments Testimony

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

I am the administrator for Wellspring Christian Family Schools. Operating since 1983, Wellspring Christian Family Schools is an educational institution operated by Walkersville Christian Fellowship, Inc. Wellspring is recognized by the MSDE as a church-exempt, K-12 nonpublic school and homeschool umbrella.

As a Christian school that firmly believes that every person is made in the image of God, we are supportive of the objective of SB 916 to educate Maryland students about the horrific consequences (such as the transatlantic slave trade and the Holocaust) that occur when that fundamental principle is disregarded. We see SB 916 as a substantive attempt to implement the oft-quoted maxim: "Those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it." This is why Wellspring students are exposed to and educated about these issues in the regular course of their studies.

Our one structural concern about SB 916 is the language in Section 2(b)(2): "A nonpublic school that is operated by a registered bona fide church organization or that has not been approved by the State Board under § 2-206 of the Education Article **is encouraged** to include in the school's social studies and history curriculum at least a unit of instruction on the topics described in subsection (a) of this section or based on the content standards and curriculum standard adopted by the State Board under subsection (a) of this section." Maryland Education Article 2-206(e)(4) clearly exempts educational institutions operated by bona fide church organizations from State program and curriculum requirements. The language of SB 916 unnecessarily infringes on the recognized autonomy of Maryland church-exempt schools in developing and implementing their curriculum. We would therefore respectfully request that **SB 916 be amended to remove Section 2(b)(2), and that language be added to Section 2(b)(1) that states that nonpublic schools operated by registered bona fide church organizations are exempted from the requirements, as their legal status requires.**

Sincerely,

Joel Fischer, J.D.

Administrator

Wellspring Christian Family Schools

Gary Cox
Superintendent

Becky Wyand
Academic Supervisor

Joel Fischer
Administration