

Favorable Written Testimony on Senate Joint Resolu

Uploaded by: Brenda Myers

Position: FAV

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

Hampstead, Maryland

SJ5 Favorable 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Education, Energy, and the Environment
Senate Joint Resolution 5
FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

Please give Senate Joint Resolution 5 a Favorable report.

The Trump/ Musk administration has made it clear that "competent white men must be in charge if you want things to work." This contradicts the evidence presented by actual history.

The Trump/ Musk administration has also made it clear that they believe that any jobs held by those who aren't white, cisgender, and heterosexual are DEI hires. Sometimes they even include white, cisgender, heterosexual women as DEI hires. Meanwhile, while screaming that people should be hired based on merit, they have put people in positions of power simply based on their white skin color, no matter how incompetent and inexperienced they are. These white supremacist actions are accepted by many in our society as ideal.

Senate Joint Resolution 5 states that Maryland supports the teaching of accurate history, not just the accomplishments of white, cisgender, heterosexual men. It states that teaching about minoritized communities is important. It rejects the white supremacist narrative that is infecting this country.

Please affirm that Maryland stands for an accurate and inclusive curriculum by voting in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 5. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

SJ 5 Favorable One Pasadena 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Joint Resolution 5
Favorable

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community is an anti-bigotry group that works to change the culture of intolerance in Pasadena, MD. We, the One Pasadena Steering Committee, urge a favorable vote on Senate Joint Resolution 5, the Elementary and Secondary Education – Curriculum – Importance of Diversity Resolution.

The authors said it best, where they stated:

“Curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools that includes the experiences of communities that have been subject to discrimination can help cultivate empathy and compassion”

And:

“Curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools that includes the experiences of communities that have been subject to discrimination can help break down stereotypes and prejudices that translate into real world harms”

If we learn about our history, which would be an inclusive history, perhaps we would not be doomed to repeat it. Please vote favorably on Senate Joint Resolution 5, and take the intent to heart, so we can do better by our students.

Sincerely,
The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD

Sj0005 diversity curriculum 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

FAVORABLE SJ0005 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION-CURRICULUM- IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

**TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair, and
the members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy
Network, Diocese of Maryland**

DATE: March 7, 2025

In 2006, the Episcopal General convention passed Resolution 2006 – A127 which stated in part; “[t]hat in the spirit of inclusion, dioceses also be invited to determine whether their call is to conduct truth and reconciliation processes in regard to other histories and legacies of racial discrimination and oppression that may be applicable in their geographic area, while not diminishing the strong call to focus on the history and legacy of slavery;”

A broad and balanced curriculum has been defined as one that “provides children with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to develop into well-rounded, informed individuals.” It is impossible to make a well-informed decision if one does not have the full background and context. A responsible citizen needs to have such a context in order to understand the current situation. Our democracy depends on having citizens who study all of our history. As Winston Churchill said during World War II, paraphrasing George Santayana, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

We expect Germany to teach the Holocaust for that very reason. We need to provide our children with full knowledge of all aspects of our history. Our democracy depends upon it. Our population is diverse, from many cultures. Our teaching of American history should reflect that diversity.

We strongly request a favorable report.

SJ5_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Joint Resolution 5
Elementary and Secondary Education – Curriculum – Importance of Diversity

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 7, 2025

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Joint Resolution 5, which would acknowledge the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in Maryland schools, specifying that curricula taught in schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

We know the history of both our state and our country is far more diverse than is reflected in the content often taught in public schools. We therefore urge support of this resolution affirming that all students deserve an education that accurately reflects the experiences, contributions, and history of communities that have experienced discrimination.

It is our hope that this resolution will prompt a holistic process of evaluating and updating State curriculum standards, and that this process will include the input of educators, families, and members of underrepresented communities.

MSEA unequivocally believes that our diversity makes us stronger, and we will continue working toward a future where all students have access to a rigorous history education.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Joint Resolution 5.

Maureen Wambui - Support Testimony for SJ0005 - EI

Uploaded by: Maureen Wambui

Position: FAV

Maureen Wambui

7827 Rolling View Ave, Nottingham, MD, 21236

Maureen.w.m.2030@gmail.com

03/05/2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

Support Testimony for SJ0005 - Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

Hearing Date: March 07, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, Parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to testify to and express my strong support for **Senate Joint Resolution 5 (SJ0005)**, which affirms the importance of incorporating a culturally diverse curriculum in Maryland's elementary and secondary schools.

Education is the foundation of an informed and united society. However, for too long, many school curricula have overlooked the rich histories and contributions of marginalized communities. SJ0005 is an important step toward rectifying these gaps and ensuring that all Maryland students receive a comprehensive and accurate education.

Why SJ0005 is Essential

1. **Promotes Inclusivity and Representation** – Students from diverse backgrounds deserve to see their histories and contributions recognized in the curriculum. A more inclusive education fosters belonging and pride while teaching all students the value of diversity.
2. **Provides a More Accurate Historical Perspective** – History should not be selective or one-sided. This resolution ensures that students learn a fuller, more truthful account of historical events, including those that have shaped marginalized communities.
3. **Encourages Cultural Awareness and Empathy** – Exposure to different cultures and histories fosters understanding, reduces prejudice, and strengthens social cohesion among students of all backgrounds.

4. **Prepares Students for a Diverse Society** – In an increasingly interconnected world, cultural competence is a crucial skill. By learning about different histories and experiences, students will be better equipped to work and thrive in diverse environments.
5. **Addresses Historical Gaps in Education** – Many significant contributions from minority groups have been left out of traditional curricula. This resolution encourages a more balanced and comprehensive approach to education.

Recommendations for Effective Implementation

While SJ0005 is a strong foundation for educational reform, I urge the committee to consider the following recommendations to ensure its success:

1. **Guidelines for Curriculum Development** – The Maryland State Department of Education should work with historians, educators, and community leaders to provide clear guidelines for integrating diverse perspectives into curricula.
2. **Teacher Training and Resources** – Educators should receive training on how to effectively teach diverse histories, ensuring that content is accurate, engaging, and age-appropriate.
3. **Parental and Community Involvement** – Schools should create opportunities for parents and local communities to contribute insights and feedback on culturally inclusive education materials.
4. **Assessment and Accountability Measures** – Periodic reviews should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum changes and ensure that schools are meeting inclusivity goals.
5. **Balanced Representation** – The curriculum should cover a broad spectrum of historical perspectives, ensuring that no single narrative dominates while maintaining academic integrity.

By passing SJ0005, Maryland will take a significant step toward fostering a more inclusive and well-rounded educational system—one that acknowledges the full breadth of history and empowers students with knowledge, empathy, and cultural awareness.

I respectfully urge the committee to support SJ0005 and ensure that Maryland remains committed to providing an education that truly reflects the diverse fabric of our society.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Wambui

SJR 5 GLSEN Maryland 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Copper

Position: FAV



BILL: Senate Joint Resolution 5 - Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

DATE: March 6, 2025

POSITION: FAVORABLE

COMMITTEE: Rules and Executive Nominations

CONTACT: Michele Schlehofer, michele@md.glsen.org

As the state chapter of the leading national organization centered on creating and sustaining inclusive K-12 education for LGBTQIA+ students, GLSEN Maryland supports Senate Joint Resolution 5, Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity. The passage of this Resolution will help ensure that all of Maryland's students will see themselves and their neighbors reflected in our schools' standards, curriculum, and supporting resources, including the experiences and history of the LGBTQIA+ community..

Along with learning about the rich tapestry of our state and country, recognizing and incorporating the importance of our state and nation's diversity including the LGBTQIA+ community has demonstrated tangible benefits for **all** students. Research by our parent organization, GLSEN National confirms that inclusive curriculum and curriculum resources, supportive educators and administrators, and accepting peer relationships, together create environments where LGBTQIA+ students feel more connected to their school community. Importantly, these affirming environments lead LGBTQIA+ and all students to increased engagement in the classroom, academic motivation, and higher academic achievement. (Koscikow, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). *The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of LGBTQ+ Youth in Our Nation's Schools*. New York: GLSEN.)

One argument by those opposed to inclusive and diverse education curriculum and environments is that our schools need to focus on academic achievements especially during these difficult fiscal times. However, it is important to stress that by having inclusive and diverse classrooms, academic achievements for all students will increase.

Accordingly, GLSEN Maryland respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on House Joint Resolution 5.



glsenmd.org



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facebook.com/GLSENMaryland



chapter@md.glsen.org

Joint Resolution Importance of Diversity in Curric

Uploaded by: Nicole Hollywood

Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **SJ005/HJ005 Joint Resolution 5 Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Dr. Nicole Hollywood

Position: **FAVORABLE**

This testimony is being submitted today on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National in strong support of Senate Joint Resolution 5.

A robust curriculum is a mirror and a door that builds knowledge and extends perspective. This means that students need to be able to see themselves in what they're learning as a reflection of themselves and their histories, and also must be encouraged to see outwards and consider perspectives and experiences different from their own. Students bring a wealth of assets, cultural referents, and experiences into the classroom. Yet, traditionally, the experiences and insights of students from historically marginalized or underrepresented groups aren't thoughtfully considered contributing to a learning environment that is not inclusive and where biases are allowed to persist. This is particularly true for LGBTQIA+ learners and learners who are Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (QTBIPOC).

Simply put, diversity in education is important because it fosters a richer learning environment by exposing students to different perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds, which empirical research shows promotes critical thinking, empathy, tolerance, and prepares students to navigate an increasingly globalized world; it also encourages creativity and innovation by allowing students to consider viewpoints beyond their own, leading to better problem-solving skills and a more inclusive society.

Cultural diversity in the classroom is on the rise. In 2014, U.S. public schools hit a minority majority milestone with Latino, African-American, and Asian students having surpassed the number of white students. In 2044, the U.S. Census predicts that over half of the nation's population will be people of color, so this trend will likely continue.

Joint resolution 5 acknowledges the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the State; providing that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination; and affirming the State of Maryland's commitment to a complete education and we recommend a favorable report.

Resources

- Aldana, A., & Byrd, C. M. (2015). School ethnic–racial socialization: Learning about race and ethnicity among African American students. *The Urban Review*, 47(3), 563-576.
- Buzzetto-Hollywood, N. (2023). Decolonization and culturally responsive teaching practices and the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 12(1), 1-15.
- Chetty, D. (2018) Culturally responsive pedagogy: working towards decolonization, indigeneity and interculturalism, *Educational Review*, 70:4, 530-531, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2018.1439707
- Cruz, R. A., Manchanda, S., Firestone, A. R., & Rodl, J. E. (2020). An Examination of Teachers' Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 43(3), 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406419875194>
- Dover, A. G. (2013). Teaching for social justice: From conceptual frameworks to classroom practices. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15, 3–11. doi:10.1080/15210960.2013. 754285
- Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43, 48–70. doi:10.1111/curi.12002
- Nieto, S. M. (2004). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Pearson Allyn & Bacon.
- O'Hare, W., & Mayol-Garcia, Y. (2023). The changing child population of the United States: Child population data from the 2020 census. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/the-changing-child-population-of-the-united-states>
- Stembridge, A. (2019). *Culturally responsive education in the classroom*. Oxfordshire, England. Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9780429441080

SJ5.The ArcMaryland.DD Council.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

SJ 5: Elementary and Secondary Education – Curriculum Importance of Diversity

March 7, 2025

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland and Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) are statewide organizations that work to protect and advance the rights and quality of life of people with disabilities. As such, we support Senate Joint Resolution 5.

WHAT does this Joint Resolution do?

- Acknowledges the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in schools
- Provides that curricula taught in schools should include all communities that have experienced discrimination, including people with disabilities
- Reaffirms that Maryland is committed to providing a robust civic, cultural, and history education so that all Marylanders are engaged and informed members of the community

WHY is this important?

- **It is important to highlight and promote the history, culture, and diversity of Maryland, including people with disabilities.** Over 114,000 students with disabilities receive special education services and supports, and represent 12.8% of the student population in Maryland.
- **The disability community is diverse and our history is full of rich stories of people with disabilities who have paved the way for greater equity, inclusion, and access for all.** Unfortunately, disability history also includes institutions, maltreatment of people throughout time, denial of human rights, and other injustices. Missing from our history books are in-depth lessons on how people with disabilities were treated in important periods of history, and information about historical figures with disabilities who shaped the world in which we live.
- **It promotes diversity and equity, and encourages safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students.** It is important that our academic standards are built to reflect the historical and intellectual contributions of diverse populations, and encourage environments that respect and welcome all people, including people with disabilities.

For more information, please contact:

Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland, akolp@thearcmd.org

Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, RLondon@md-council.org

Testimony in support of SJ0005 - Elementary and Se

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SJ0005_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/07/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SJ#0005 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ **SJ#/0005, Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity**

The School of Education at The American University has studied and documented *The Benefits of Inclusion and Diversity in the Classroom* ¹

- Diversity Improves Cognitive Skills and Critical Thinking
- Exposure to Diversity Helps Students Enter Adulthood
- Diversity Prepares Students for Citizenship
- Diversity Promotes Creativity
- Allows Students to Learn about Their Community
- Establishes a Zero-Indifference Negative Behavior Policy

[Benefits for Educators]

- Discover How to Encourage Inclusivity and Diversity as an Educator
- Learn about Students' Cultural Backgrounds
- Create a Culturally Responsive Learning Environment
- Learn How to Foster Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

Diversio.com has also studied Diversity in Education and come to these conclusions: ²

DEI in education refers to the commitment to creating a learning environment that embraces **diversity** by representing different identities and perspectives, **equity** by providing the necessary resources for all students to succeed, and **inclusion** by ensuring that everyone feels valued and engaged in the educational experience. It aims to prepare students for a diverse world while addressing systemic barriers.

¹ <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/benefits-of-inclusion-and-diversity-in-the-classroom/>

² <https://diversio.com/industries/dei-education/#:~:text=Challenging%20conventional%20views%3A%20DEI%20encourages,sharpening%20their%20critical%20thinking%20skills.>

SJ0005_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

This bill makes Maryland a leader in the resistance to the attack at the Federal level on DEI in education. It accomplishes that by acknowledging the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the State. It says that everyone in Maryland is part of the fabric of our society and needs to know the full panoply of the history and cultures of any minority that is part of our community. This bill will provide that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination. This bill proudly affirms the State of Maryland's commitment to a complete education.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SJ0005.

SJ0005 Education Equity Written Testimony (Cover L

Uploaded by: Senator Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**Testimony in Favor of SJ0005: Elementary and Secondary Education -
Curriculum - Importance of Diversity**

The Honorable Senator Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Senator Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Annapolis, MD

March 7th, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of this committee,

It is my pleasure to come before you and offer my testimony in support of Senate Bill SJ0005: Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity. This bill will affirm Maryland's intention to teach a culturally diverse curriculum across elementary and secondary schools in a nondiscriminatory, inclusive manner.

This resolution is invaluable in ensuring that all students receive an education that accurately reflects the full spectrum of Maryland's history and evolves to mirror our increasing diversity. For too long, curricula have disproportionately underrepresented communities that have experienced discrimination.

Education is one of the most powerful tools in creating a more equitable world and breaking down harmful perspectives. A curriculum that incorporates learning about communities affected by discrimination equips all students with the awareness to promote justice and equity. Increasing diversity in the classroom has not only been proven to help shape students' intellectual self confidence, but also enhance critical thinking and problem solving skills, increase creativity, and expand cultural sensitivity.

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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This resolution promotes meaningful change in Maryland in accordance with the goals of equity, inclusion, and a well-rounded education for all students. I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young".

Senator Karen Lewis Young

CFCC Testimony in Support SJ 0005.pdf

Uploaded by: Shahbano Syed

Position: FAV

**Testimony of The University of Baltimore School of Law's Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff
Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC)**

In Support of SJ 0005

Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

March 5, 2025

Dear Chairperson Brian J. Feldman, Vice-Chairperson Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Shahbano Syed, and I am a current second-year student and a student fellow for The Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC) at the University of Baltimore School of Law. The CFCC envisions communities where children and families thrive without unnecessary involvement in the legal system. We engage communities in all that we do to work towards transforming systems that create barriers to family well-being.

CFCC strongly supports SJ 0005, which seeks to incorporate a more culturally diverse curriculum that includes the history of communities that have experienced discrimination in elementary and secondary schools. This bill would **create an inclusive learning environment for all students, foster empathy and understanding, and positively contribute to student's social-emotional development.**

I. SJ 0005 would create a more inclusive learning environment for a diverse student population.

Maryland schools are becoming increasingly diverse, and the current student population is 33% White students, 33% Black/African American students, 22% Hispanic/Latino students, and 7% Asian students.¹ Despite a diverse student population, studies reveal that approximately 90% of children's books depict White characters and narratives, while Black, Indigenous, and people of color account for the remaining 10%.² Another study details a strong preferential treatment of specific outlooks, particularly the White

¹ Maryland State Department of Education, *Maryland at a Glance*, <https://strategicplan.marylandpublicschools.org/maryland-at-a-glance/>, (Last visited Mar. 31, 2025).

² Armstrong, Amanda, *A Troubling Lack of Diversity in Educational Materials*, (Mar. 9, 2022), <https://www.edutopia.org/article/troubling-lack-diversity-educational-materials/>.

perspective, in the incorporation of a school curriculum, which can have lasting consequences for students who are from diverse backgrounds.³ A pattern of underrepresentation of racial and ethnic backgrounds can be troubling and could negatively impact a student's overall academic achievement and sense of belongingness.⁴ SJ 0005 will foster a more inclusive curriculum for all students, with care and consideration of their diverse backgrounds. SJ 0005 will help promote a more equitable learning environment, all while promoting and appreciating the unique differences that each student brings to the classroom.

II. SJ 0005 would foster empathy and understanding amongst students.

Empathy is a precursor to accepting diversity, as it helps us understand and relate to the feelings of others.⁵ Studies reveal that reading can promote the empathetic quality in children, which would be further enhanced when children are provided with learning materials and books with characters from diverse backgrounds.⁶ Additionally, incorporating diversity in the curriculum for students early in their education can result in more respectful and prosocial interactions among students, regardless of their differences.⁷ A lack of exposure to a curriculum that helps students understand other students from different backgrounds risks the opportunity of becoming a cohesive, compassionate collective and could potentially result in conflict. SJ 0005 would help students acknowledge the discrimination embedded in our society towards students of color and help build empathy and understanding toward these differences.

III. SJ 0005 would positively contribute to student's social-emotional development.

Mental health comprises our psychological, emotional, and social well-being, and it can significantly impact a student's engagement in the classroom and relationship-building with others.⁸ A culturally diverse curriculum can positively contribute to a student's academic and social-emotional development.⁹ Students not represented in the curriculum are more likely to feel invisible and disengaged in the classroom.¹⁰ A more inclusive approach to curriculum can help these students feel more seen and result in positive

³ Iweuno, Blessing N., et al., *Impact Of Racial Representation In Curriculum Content On Student Identity And Performance*, (Jul. 28, 2024), <https://wjarr.com/sites/default/files/WJARR-2024-2280.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Viers, Karen, *Teaching Empathy: A Precursor to Accepting Diversity*, (May 2022), <https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1904&context=honors>.

⁶ Samuel, Rachel, *Why It's Critical for Students to "See Themselves" in Classroom Materials*, (Feb. 19, 2020), <https://readtolead.org/why-its-critical-for-students-to-see-themselves-in-classroom-materials/>.

⁷ American University, *Diversity in the Classroom: Teaching, Types, and Examples*, (Jan. 27, 2023), <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/diversity-in-the-classroom/>.

⁸ Choudhury, Mohammed, *Mental Health in Schools*, (Feb. 22, 2022), <https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0222/MentalHealthinSchoolsFebruary2022V2.pdf>.

⁹ Iweuno, Blessing N., et al., *Impact Of Racial Representation In Curriculum Content On Student Identity And Performance*, (Jul. 28, 2024), <https://wjarr.com/sites/default/files/WJARR-2024-2280.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

academic achievement.¹¹ Further, Research reveals that a student's learning experience is impacted by what they see, including seeing themselves in a positive light in a book for class. Something as simple as that can help affirm their sense of self and support others who view them from a different perspective that promotes diversity.¹² A student exposed to this diverse outlook can become more understanding and less apathetic towards minority groups.¹³ SJ 0005 would help historically underrepresented students feel more seen and improve their overall social-emotional well-being in and outside the classroom.

Conclusion

SJ 0005 will improve the learning environment, all while fostering empathy and understanding and positively contributing to each student's social-emotional development.

For these reasons, the CFCC strongly supports SJ 0005 and urges a favorable report.

¹¹ Samuel, Rachel, *Why It's Critical for Students to "See Themselves" in Classroom Materials*, (Feb. 19, 2020), <https://readtolead.org/why-its-critical-for-students-to-see-themselves-in-classroom-materials/>.

¹² Iweuno, Blessing N., et al., *Impact Of Racial Representation In Curriculum Content On Student Identity And Performance*, (Jul. 28, 2024), <https://wjarr.com/sites/default/files/WJARR-2024-2280.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.*

HJ0005_SJ0005_ Elementary and Secondary Education

Uploaded by: Jeremy Browning

Position: FWA



**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>

No on SJ0005.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebekah Esko

Position: UNF

No on SJ0005

The best way to combat prejudice is to foster understanding—to focus on commonalities and provide students opportunities to create friendships with other students who are different from themselves in some ways and similar to themselves in other ways.

Teaching and modeling kindness as a principle that should be applied generally is the best way to do this. Research has shown that hyper focus on diversity, labels, and discrimination actually has the opposite of the intended results. Instead of seeing others as part of a valuable shared humanity, it leads to division, anxiety, and suspicion.

Affirming the importance of every member of the community is a worthy goal. Students are already taught the history of countries and groups with attention to the contributions of historically marginalized groups.

Mandating an additional emphasis on the teaching of history of discrimination in specific categories is likely to have the opposite of the intended effect.

Additionally, sexual orientation and gender identity are sexual topics and should not be mandated for students beginning in elementary school without parental opt out.

For these reasons, SJ0005 does not meet its goals and will not have positive results.

Diversity Training Can Make Race Relations Worse

<https://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/study-dei-training-could-make-racial-tensions-worse/910245>
24

‘Anti-racist materials induce prejudicial attitudes and racial suspicion’

<https://hbr.org/2024/06/research-the-most-common-dei-practices-actually-undermine-diversity>

Written Testimony for HJ 005_SJ 005_ Elementary a

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HJ 005/SJ 005**: Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity - Please **VOTE NO** on this House Joint Resolution.

Dear Rules & Executive Nominations Committee:

This Resolution has erroneous statements that are simply political, arbitrary and biased.

The bill's synopsis states "Acknowledging the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the State; providing that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination; and affirming the State of Maryland's commitment to a complete education." I agree that our schools should teach a diverse curriculum in all our schools. The statement "history of communities that have experienced discrimination" is arbitrary and biased. Where is the evidence of this? This is a political statement or phrase that is not substantiated in any way. I certainly do not remember any lessons that were discriminatory when I was in public school.

The bill further states " WHEREAS, Curricula taught in Maryland's elementary and secondary schools has continuously underrepresented communities that have experienced discrimination." Again, where is the evidence of that? Please provide examples where any group was underrepresented in any lessons in our public schools. Again, I certainly do not remember any group feeling underrepresented when I attended public school in Maryland. This is simply another political statement.

"...WHEREAS, It is crucial to address the issue of representation and inclusion in education to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to receive a complete education." Please provide examples of any children that do not have "an equal opportunity to receive a complete education." Also, there is no definition of a "complete education". What does a "complete education" include? Even when my children attended school, I did not see or hear anything about any child not having an equal opportunity to receive a complete education, except possibly special education students. Children in non-special education classrooms have been given Chromebooks to assist in their education. Where is there a child that was specifically discriminated against by **not** giving them a Chromebook or other materials so that there wasn't "an equal opportunity to receive a complete education"? Children do **not** need to receive any information from our school system about "diversity" in order to have a "complete" academic education.

“WHEREAS, Curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools that includes the experiences of communities that have been subject to discrimination can help cultivate empathy and compassion.” Please include links to well-documented studies that demonstrate a direct correlation between “Curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools that include the experiences of communities that have been subject to discrimination...” and this curricula helping to cultivate empathy and compassion. Empathy and compassion can be “cultivated” in the home, in a child’s religious upbringing, in a child having friends from diverse and different backgrounds, etc. There are many other sources from which “empathy and compassion” can be “cultivated”. Please demonstrate where public school curricula is the ONLY source from which children can be taught “empathy and compassion.” When you make blanket statements such as this, you mislead the public into thinking and believing that our public schools can achieve social change via the curricula, and that is not realistic or even true, and achieving social change is NOT the responsibility of our schools in the first place.

WHEREAS, Curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools that includes the experiences of communities that have been subject to discrimination can help break down stereotypes and prejudices that translate into real world harms”. The same reasoning from the previous paragraph can be used for this statement as well. Please provide a direct correlation that the curricula in our public schools can DIRECTLY “help break down stereotypes and prejudices...” Again, stereotypes and prejudices can be broken down by what is taught in the child’s home, by the teachings in the child’s religious upbringing and from children having friends from different, diverse backgrounds outside of school. Also, please provide DIRECT evidence that public school curricula translate into decreasing “real world harms”. Making such a bold statement needs to be directly substantiated by “real world” data that directly proves a decrease in “real world harms”.

“RESOLVED, That it is the policy of the State of Maryland that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools encompass groups of people that have experienced discrimination based on their disability, ethnicity, gender, indigenous American Tribal affiliation, race, religion or faith, and sexual orientation...” Again, this is a nice, political statement, but it is untrue and certainly not “resolved”. I haven’t seen any curricula that encompassed “religion or faith” specifically when I my attended school, and my youngest children graduated in 2022. I do not remember any Christian curricula that encompassed what was taught at home or at church. So does that mean that I was discriminated against and that I was underrepresented or even unrepresented? Do we need to include curricula that encompass “religion or faith” into our children's daily education? I would love to review some curricula that encompass “religion or faith”.

“RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland is committed to providing robust civic, cultural, and history education so that its citizens are engaged and informed members of our community.” When and where has it ever been stated that our educational system is REQUIRED to produce “engaged...members of our community”? No school system can make their students be “engaged members of our society”. The responsibility of our education system is to teach academics that will help our students become **productive** members of our society. Our education system does not have any direct responsibility other than to educate our students and keep them safe. It is not the responsibility of our school system to make social justice warriors of our students!! It would behoove our school systems to produce well-educated students that can get well-paying jobs and that will be able to live productively on their own and take care of themselves by paying their bills. If we can do this, having citizens that contribute positively to society will take care of itself. This issue is definitely not resolved, because our school systems are producing and graduating the least educated students in our history!

Also, President Trump has cancelled DEI instruction in our schools in an Executive Order. This is just another attempt to continue DEI in our schools in direct opposition to President Trump’s Executive Order.

Please **VOTE NO** on this House Joint Resolution, and show our children that they do not need DEI in our schools to get a “complete” education. We can educate our children and “teach” them to treat everyone fairly, equally and with respect by holding them accountable to treating everyone that way.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals