



## 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