

HJ0005 -- Elementary and Secondary Education-Curriculum-Importance of Diversity (Resolution).

Position: Favorable

2/27/25

Dear Chairperson Healey, Vice Chair Holmes and Members of the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

I am a resident of Anne Arundel County and District 31; I am also a mother of two grown sons who attended our public schools. I am writing to **SUPPORT HJ0005 -- Elementary and Secondary Education-Curriculum-Importance of Diversity** (Resolution). This Resolution acknowledges the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the State; provides that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination; and affirms the State of Maryland's commitment to a complete education.

I firmly believe is essential for all Maryland students to have access to comprehensive and accurate information about cultural diversity, racism and the experience of marginalized communities. We are not properly educating our children if we exclude this information from our public school curriculum.

Maryland's youth are vibrant, intelligent and inquisitive. We cannot and should not try to avoid teaching certain topics because they are awkward or sensitive or because they depict very difficult aspects of history. In addition, we want these topics to be taught by certified educators and based upon approved, evidence-based curriculum. In doing this, we encourage our students to think critically, understand our country and the world more fully and if they have questions, be more aware of the resources that are available. Comprehensive curriculum about culture and history enables students to learn the rich diversity in our communities which leads to greater compassion, understanding and acceptance of others who are different. This leads to diminished hate and bias. It is vital for our students' overall educational achievement and success in the world.

Some adults mistakenly believe that children should not be exposed to information that makes them uncomfortable, even though the information accurately describes important aspects of our history. This belief is hugely limiting and detrimental to our youth. The history of the United States is complicated and sometimes extremely distressing but it is essential that children learn about these truths in a thoughtful and age-appropriate way. Our country's history of slavery, the long-term effects on the BIPOC community and the huge impact on our society needs to be taught in a truthful way. Our history of genocide of Indigenous people needs to be taught. The periods in which our country has done other types of harm to marginalized groups such as

LGBTQIA folks needs to be taught. When we ignore or deny these parts of our history, we set ourselves up to repeat it. In addition, the history of the positive achievements of the United States and the many times we have done honorable and positive things needs to be taught. But we cannot suppress or sugar coat aspects of our history that are upsetting.

Teaching these topics in age-appropriate ways does not cause division, confusion or difficulty for children. It simply ensures that they are getting accurate and comprehensive information so they are better prepared to be thoughtful adults with critical thinking skills and effective ways of understanding the richness of humanity and the world.

Please SUPPORT HJ0005.

Sincerely,

Abbie Ellicott
Severna Park, MD 21146
D31