

FAV, HB 1185
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Testimony in Support of House Bill 1185

House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1185, "Homeschool Students in Maryland - Right to Play". I am a current homeschooled high school student and have been involved in Maryland's homeschool community since the second grade. I have also played basketball for several years.

Throughout my educational journey, I was fortunate that I could access recreational youth basketball leagues, such as Elev8 Basketball in Columbia. However, some homeschoolers in the state do not have access to these opportunities—whether that be due to living in a more rural area, the financial cost, or any number of other reasons. Meanwhile others may desire the ability to play in a more competitive setting.

Many leagues outside of the school system do not offer the same level of competitiveness as those inside. I have seen that, oftentimes, public school students will prioritize playing on their high school team, because those teams offer more resources and open a pathway to competing in college-level sports. Some of my homeschooled peers have the ability and determination to play at the collegiate level, however making it there appears impossible due to the added hurdles of existing outside of public school athletics.

I firmly believe that homeschooled students should have access to sports in public high schools—this bill promotes equality amongst educational backgrounds by doing just that. Especially given that the status quo discriminates against homeschooled students who do not have the resources, live in a remote area, or cannot afford to play in leagues outside of the school system, I urge that we open the door for these youth to participate in the athletics programs that their tax dollars already pay for.

As Matthew Amunrud states in his article¹ on the topic, published in the *Tulsa Law Review*, "Whatever the reason a family has for homeschooling their child, the child should not be excluded from equal involvement in extracurriculars because of their educational background" (Amunrud 618). In order to promote inclusion and provide better resources for homeschooled student athletes, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1185.

Sincerely,
Sebastian Blondet

¹ Matthew Amunrud, *All in: A Proposal for Uniform Homeschool Access to Public School Extracurriculars in Texas and Similar "Half-way" States*, 59 *Tulsa L. Rev.* 603 (2024).