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BILL: HB 1185

TITLE: Homeschool Students in Maryland - Right to Play

DATE: March 5, 2025

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: House Ways & Means Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 1185.

This bill authorizes a public high school to allow a student participating in a certain home instruction program to participate in athletic activities including interscholastic athletics in which a student may participate outside of regular school hours and for which a student does not earn academic credit. It also requires a public high school to give placement priority to a student enrolled in a certain high school over a student who is not enrolled in the school if there are a limited number of spaces available for students in the extracurricular activity. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

PSSAM opposes this bill's expanded eligibility of students participating in public school interscholastic events. State regulations require students to be officially enrolled in and attending a public school. However, students who are homeschooled would not be held to the same eligibility criteria, as homeschool academic and attendance standards differ from those of public schools. Additionally, in the event of injuries or other incidents, public school students would be covered under existing policies, whereas homeschooled students would not have the same protections. This legislation could create significant challenges related to school system liability, increased demands on staff, and disruptions to enrolled students.

Our opposition is consistent with the policies and procedures supported by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) who oversee Maryland's interscholastic sports.

Interscholastic sports throughout Maryland's public schools are managed based on standards set by the MPSSAA and regulations established by the State Board of Education. Since 1991, these sports have been governed by the "Master Agreement Outlining the Interscholastic Structure for Public Schools in Maryland," which defines the roles of the MPSSAA, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and local school systems.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1185 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** report.