

TO: House Committee on Ways and Means

BILL: House Bill (HB) 763 - Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

DATE: February 25, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the State Board of Education respectfully oppose **HB 763**, which would require Maryland's Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and non-public schools that receive textbook and technology grants to incorporate instructional materials for students in grades 6 through 8 that promote the awareness of human and sex trafficking in their health education curriculum.

We do not oppose this legislation on the merits of the identified curricular content but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would be duplicative of current regulatory requirements and run counter to the process that is entrusted to the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), MSDE, and LEAs.

The State Board and MSDE have a structured and collaborative process for reviewing, revising, and adopting standards, frameworks, and curricular resources was reaffirmed on January 23, 2024. This process ensures that all curriculum updates are evidence-based, age-appropriate, and developed in collaboration between the State Board, MSDE, the Maryland Department of Health, LEAs, and community members through the Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee (SFVC).

As part of this process, the Comprehensive Health Education SFVC began its review of the Comprehensive Health Education Framework in July 2024. HB 763 would disrupt this established process, creating unnecessary redundancies and potentially delaying the scheduled updates.

Additionally, the established Comprehensive Health Education Framework, aligned with the 2nd edition of the National Health Education Standards, addresses age-appropriate topics related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking. Moreover, compliance with the framework is enforced through COMAR 13A.04.18.02, which requires local superintendents to certify that health education instruction meets, at a minimum, the requirements of the Comprehensive Health Education Framework.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 763**. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. (Executive Director of Government Affairs) akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov for any additional information.