



TESTIMONY FOR HB0197
Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools – Comprehensive Plan

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Pasteur

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0197 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Blueprint for Education was a landmark piece of legislation designed to give Maryland's children the best education possible. It was the result of years of research and best practice recommendations. It was comprehensive in terms of the process of educating our children, but it's mandate does not cover one other important facet of education – a safe and caring environment.

Restorative practices help wrap the learning aspect of schools with emotional support. They include such things as conflict resolution, mediation, and trauma-informed care. When you have the proper emotional and social supports in a school, both teachers and students feel safer and are more engaged in the learning process.

This bill, if enacted, would require the Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan by July 1, 2026 for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools. The plan would include identifying qualified personnel to provide training, establishing model training materials, determining intended outcomes and performance metrics. It also requires a county board of education to use that comprehensive plan if the county board decides to establish a Restorative Practices School.

Developing such a plan is a crucial framework that will ensure that Maryland will truly have the best schools in the nation.

Our members support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.