

Subject: Favorable HB 197: Restorative Practices in Schools

Date: January 29, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: House Ways and Means Committee

The Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Ways and Means Committee to give HB 197 a favorable report.

HB 197 calls upon the State Department of Education to develop a restorative practice plan. This plan will offer alternatives to suspensions and other disciplinary procedures. A school that uses restorative practices will emphasize conflict resolution and other opportunities to help a student make better choices about behavior. Statistics show that students with disabilities make up a large part of suspensions and expulsions in a school. The restorative practices plan is the beginning of changing these statistics. All students need a positive environment that emphasizes discussion of a problem and meaningful conflict resolution and a rewards system when their behavior improves.

Please vote Yes on HB 197. Give students the opportunity to get an equitable education. Because of this bill, the school administration can be creative in solving truancy and other difficult problems.

For questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.