

Dear House Committee,

PLEASE STOP THIS EXCEPTIONALLY BAD BILL [HB 649] IN ITS TRACKS, VOTE it down please! Just say NO.

Everything you state in this bill in the name of "EQUIL" will actually discriminate and harm 1,000's of Maryland families who have made a conscious effort to not support and to intentionally avoid the public school system. Do what you will publicly but please leave our PRIVATE schools alone. Online research: Approximately 125,000 to 143,000 Maryland students attend private schools. Considering the failure rate in the Maryland public school system; this bill is an attempt to bring private schools down to that level

Maryland online literacy rate: 48.8% of adults read below an 8th-grade level, while 20% read below a 3rd-grade level. Additionally, over 66,000 Maryland students in grades 4 and 8 are not reading at a proficient level. This is what public schools are producing, our only hope is a private education in Maryland. Your bill is a bad "one-size-fits-all" mistake, please prevent this from happening.

Your bill is bad because it is an:

1. Infringement on Religious Autonomy

Opponents argue that these mandates force religious schools to adopt policies or curricula that conflict with their core faith-based missions. This is often viewed as a violation of the **First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause**, as it could compel schools to endorse or implement views on sexuality, gender, or social issues that they religiously oppose.



Parker Poe +2

2. Misplacement of Regulatory Oversight

Shifting educational disputes to the **State Office for Civil Rights** (or similar bodies) is criticized because these agencies are typically designed for **employment-related legal issues**, not for managing the nuances of a school's disciplinary policies or pedagogical choices. Critics claim this creates a "one-size-fits-all" regulatory environment that ignores the unique, mission-driven nature of private education.



Maryland Matters

3. Destruction of Educational Pluralism

Increasing the regulatory and legal burden on small, private, or parochial schools may make them financially and operationally unsustainable. This could lead to a **reduction in educational options** for families who seek alternatives to the public school system, effectively narrowing the state's educational landscape.



ACLU of Maryland

4. Violation of Parental Rights

Legislation that restricts the ability of private schools to operate according to their specific values also impacts **parental rights**. Many families choose private education specifically for its specialized curriculum or religious environment; critics argue that state intervention overrides a parent's right to direct the upbringing and education of their children according to their own beliefs.



Parker Poe +3

Thank you for taking this important information into account. My son is away at college; I sent my child to private schools from the age of 2 (Chesapeake Montessori and St. Mary's) till the end of high school (Archbishop Spalding) age 18. We gave up so much to be able to afford his 16 yrs of private education, please consider all of the families, which are many, your bill will harm. Vote it down, vote No to HB 649.

Suzanne Duffy
Anne Arundel Co, 21401