

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

Testimony Favorable to HB0014: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

March 30, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. **I am writing to you today to ask you to vote favorably, with amendment, on HB0014.**

HB0014 standardizes and improves the bullying, harassment, and intimidation forms that school boards of education compile and report on to add the concrete reasons for the bullying, harassment, and intimidation to include: race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability.

Many school districts within Maryland already compile this information, but not all of them do. In fact some of the district school boards lump all bullying, harassment, and intimidation into a single category - leaving no accountability for school districts to address the most prevalent forms of such incidents.

I am a transgender person, with two children in Montgomery County Public Schools. If my children were bullied, harassed or intimidated because their parent is transgender, I would want the form that the school board assembles to indicate that. Luckily, I live in a county that does just that.

In addition, because the school district compiles their data including the reasons for bullying, etc. I can make an educated guess about whether or not my children would be safe attending school in a particular district. And in Montgomery County, I can even see data on each individual school because it is released each year as part of their School Climate Surveys.

HB0014 was recently amended to require a substantial increase of discrimination in these incidents in order to require reporting on all categories of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. It does so without defining what a substantial increase would be. Additionally, having accurate information about the reasons for these incidents is critical to recognizing the very trends the original bill reporting aims to enable.

I want all school districts in Maryland to be fully accountable to all parents and students.. **It is for this reason that I ask for a favorable vote with amendment on HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

Sincerely,
Ezra MacLeod Towne
Wheaton, D18