

SB 685/HB 1168: Local School Systems - Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct - Response Policy and After-Action Review: Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill **WITH AMENDMENTS**.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee and Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **SUPPORT SB 685/HB 1168** during committee consideration or floor votes, with the following amendments to strengthen parental notification, record retention, and public accountability.

I fully support the core goals of establishing clear, consistent procedures to protect students from sexual abuse and sexual misconduct by school employees or contractors, ensure prompt investigations, and learn from incidents. However, the current language could be improved with targeted amendments to better protect children and families:

1. Require notification of an allegation of child abuse by an employee of the local school system to be provided to the child's parent or guardian as soon as possible and not later than within **2 school days**. Timely parental notification is essential for supporting the child, accessing resources, and maintaining trust in the school system.
2. Require that all e-mail and electronic records regarding a credible allegation of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by an employee be retained by the local school system for a minimum of **5 years**. This ensures critical evidence is preserved for investigations, audits, or future reviews, preventing premature destruction of documentation.
3. **Require** that a written redacted report of the findings of the after-action review be provided to the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent. (Change the language from "may" to "shall"). Sharing redacted findings statewide promotes transparency, allows the Department to identify systemic issues, and helps disseminate lessons learned to all local systems for stronger prevention.

These amendments enhance child protection, parental involvement, evidence preservation, and systemic accountability without weakening the bill's intent. **With these changes, SB 685/HB 1168 would become a more robust, effective framework to safeguard students from sexual abuse and misconduct in Maryland schools.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote in favor of SB 685/HB 1168 and support the proposed amendments to strengthen notification, retention, and reporting requirements.**

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my support with minor changes to this critical student safety legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals