

SB0685_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0685- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Local School Systems - Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct - Response Policy and After-Action Review

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0685, **Local School Systems - Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct - Response Policy and After-Action Review**

“Schools are supposed to be safe spaces. For many children, they are where friendships are built, lessons are learned, and futures are shaped. But for survivors of school-related sexual abuse, the classroom became a place of betrayal and trauma. When a teacher, coach, principal, or staff member uses their position of power to harm a student, the impact can last a lifetime.”¹

In recent years, schools across Maryland have been embroiled in sex abuse scandals. Through investigations, public record releases, and legal filings, it is clear that these and other schools across the state have struggled with pervasive sexual abuse problems for years, and that school officials have routinely faced claims related to their negligence in protecting students, improper hiring and supervision of employees and teachers, and their failure to adequately respond to allegations. Some examples include:²

- **[Calvert Hall College High School \(Towson, Baltimore County\)](#)**
- **[The Talmudical Academy \(Pikesville, Baltimore County\)](#)**
- **[McDonogh School \(Owings Mills, Baltimore County\)](#)**
- **[Northeast High School \(Pasadena, Anne Arundel County\)](#)**
- **[Gilman School \(Roland Park, Baltimore County\)](#)**
- **[Walt Whitman High School \(Bethesda, Montgomery County\)](#)**
- **[Key School \(Annapolis, Anne Arundel County\)](#)**
- **[W.C. Moffett School \(Barclay, Queen Anne’s County\)](#)**

This bill will require the State Department of Education to develop a model sexual abuse and sexual misconduct response policy that includes, at minimum, certain components; requiring each local school system to adopt a certain response policy on or before July 1, 2027; and requiring each local school system to provide certain notices and conduct certain after-action reviews under certain circumstances.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0685.

¹ <https://lawyerpages.law/article/sexual-abuse-in-maryland-schools-holding-public-and-private-institutions-accountable.html>

² <https://www.levylaw.com/maryland-school-sexual-abuse-lawsuits/>