Lee Blinder (they/them)
Executive Director
Lee@transmaryland.org

Wednesday April 1, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 Miller West Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

House Bill #14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Because Trans Maryland believes in protecting the rights of all Marylanders, particularly transgender community members, to have access to a quality education free of bullying or harassment, whether it be on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national origin, native language, disability, or religion, we write in support of House Bill 14.

Maryland law requires County Boards of Education to report to the State Board of Education incidents of bullying and harassment motivated by perceived personal characteristics such as race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability. However, under current law, County Boards are not required to track or report the perceived personal characteristic for which the student was targeted. This creates a ridiculous scenario where schools are required to collect and report extensive information about bullying and harassment except for the reason the bullying occurred in the first place.

House Bill 14 would remedy this problem, requiring County Boards to collect and report this data to the State Board of Education. In addition, it would also require County Boards to publish by January 31 of each year an annual report on the total number of incidents of bullying and harassment on the basis of perceived personal characteristics, broken down into the motivating personal characteristics.

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This information is absolutely critical to ensuring a safe learning environment for all Maryland students. It will not only help County Boards identify the communities most at risk of bullying and harassment, it will also help the State Board of Education, Maryland Department of Education, and other agencies to track whether anti-bullying interventions are having a positive or negative effect.

Beyond its use to the state, publication of this information can also be incredibly empowering to students who were themselves victims of bullying and harassment. It demonstrates to them that if they tell their stories, they will be counted and that County Boards can be held accountable for their actions or inactions in response. It can also help students to know that they are not alone, that others face and have faced the same harassment, and that perhaps by standing up together they can fight back against a status quo that treats them as others.

For the record, Trans Maryland would be in strong support of a proposed amendment to potentially require further disaggregation of data to report incidents at the school, rather than the county, level if it could be drafted so as to address concerns about particular students being identifiable where there are too few reports on a particular perceived personal characteristic.

To conclude, Trans Maryland urges a favorable with amendment report on House Bill 14. We support the new amendment proposed in the Senate which would remove the amendment made in the House creating closer alignment to the original intent of the bill.