

Dear Chair and members of the Ways and Means committee,

My name is Zaira Chicas-Guzman, and I currently serve as Student Commissioner at the Baltimore City Board of Education. I am representing the Associated Congress of Baltimore City in support of HB0014.

As a student leader, I hear and receive student complaints directly. Earlier in my term, I received over 30 complaints about bullying and climate from students across multiple City schools. Most elementary and middle schools.

A majority of these incidents happen during recess or in moments without strong supervision. Behind adults' backs. Quietly. Repeatedly.

And when bullying is quiet, it remains invisible. This bill matters because it makes patterns visible.

Requiring reports to include personal characteristics that motivated the bullying AND requiring the district to publicly share disaggregated data creates accountability. When we can see who is being targeted and why, we can respond intentionally instead of reactively.

- Dive deeper into data to support data creating accountability
- Add transparency?

This issue is deeply personal. As my younger sister was bullied for 2 years, at *5 years old*. She'd come home crying most days. She seemed isolated when we picked her up, and dreaded entering the building.

No five-year old should associate school with fear.

Students cannot focus on learning when they do not feel safe walking into their classrooms. Safe schools are NOT optional; they are foundational.

HB 0014 helps ensure that when bullying occurs, especially when motivated by race, gender identity, disability, or other personal circumstances, it's documented, tracked, and addressed.

On behalf of ASCBC, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB0014.

- Insert ASCBC Platform issues connection.

Thank you.