

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

<b>Bill:</b>	House Bill 14	<b>Date:</b>	April 1, 2026
<b>Title:</b>	County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements	<b>Committee:</b>	Education, Energy, and the Environment
<b>Position:</b>	Favorable with amendments	<b>Contact:</b>	Kimberly Buckheit <a href="mailto:kimberly.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kimberly.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for House Bill 14 as currently amended.

Safe schools are inclusive environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship. School safety includes physical and emotional well being. MCSS recognizes the importance of distinguishing bully, harassment, or intimidation behavior that is motivated by an individual's personal characteristics. Doing so allows school officials to respond in a manner that decreases the likelihood of hate, bias motivated behavior from occurring in the future.

Gathering information at the school level about the occurrence of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that were motivated by a real or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or group informs appropriate next steps to mitigate and remediate. Analyzing patterns and trends of incident data allows school officials to determine student populations that are particularly vulnerable and initiate steps to prevent harm to these individuals, as well as direct services and efforts toward instruction and remediation to decrease incidents.

Using a public health informed approach to address the problem of hate and bias requires engagement by a wide range of school safety partners. Behavior occurs across environments; school, home, recreation, online, thus efforts to ameliorate the problem should cross settings. Posting incident data at the local level in a manner that encourages a whole community approach leads to solution focused action. MCSS remains committed to collaborating with MSDE and local school systems in support of achieving the intended outcomes of House Bill 14.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above, and MCSS respectfully requests that the committee give House Bill 14 as amended a favorable report.

