

To: Members of the Senate and House

Date: 3/2/2026

Subject: Support to Maryland Senate Bill 659 & House Bill 1032: "Prekindergarten Programs and Primary and Secondary Schools - Student Privacy Policy Requirements and Discrimination Reporting"

Hi, my name is Cooper Speach, I am 15 years old and I am a 9th grader at Wye River Upper School in Centerville, but I live in Annapolis, I also identify as a gay teen. I am writing in support of Maryland Senate Bill 650 and House Bill 1032 to require policies to protect student privacy regarding their records and requiring nonpublic schools to report discrimination against students.

I feel that these bills would benefit students of all kinds, allowing more privacy and safety to children. Even as a child still today and a part of the LGBTQIA+ community as well I feel that I would appreciate seeing this be put into motion for our younger generation and their futures. I know that this will probably never affect me, but I feel that it will positively affect others to come. Even though the children that this will help will probably not understand or realize the benefit of this bill, it will surely help them in the long run.

Going back on how it will require schools to report discrimination. I feel that this will also save lives, I know of many instances of queer children taking their lives due to discrimination and harassment about their identity and this still happens today. It needs to stop. I feel this bill will at least help these children lead better lives where they are free to be who they want to be without having to worry about what others think of them. Even though it is somewhat rare for children to take their lives, discrimination still negatively impacts children all over the world. It makes them feel small and unwanted. It makes them feel like they are not valid and their thoughts don't matter. It makes other children think that it is okay to bully and harass people that are different and it is just a bad thing.

In conclusion, I feel this bill will do lots of good for the wellbeing and growth of children and help them discover who they truly are. So I ask you to think of these children as if they were your own, think of how you would feel if your child came home with bruises and cuts on their body because a group of other kids put their hands on them because they were different, because they believe in something that others don't. Imagine you come home one day to find your child has taken their own life because of the constant torment and anguish they are put through because of what they believe in, because of what they like. I ask you to pass this bill to take a stand even if it is just a small step towards a brighter future for our generation and the generations to come.

Yours truly,

Cooper Speach