

Chicas-Guzman Zayra HB0014 Testimony - Google Docs

Uploaded by: Benjamin Grimaldi

Position: FAV

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.

Camille DiGiovanni HB14 Favorable Testimony.docx.p

Uploaded by: Camille Elizabeth

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information
Collection and Reporting Requirements**

**Education, Energy, and Environment – April 1, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. I am a member of the WDC's Next Generation and a student in Montgomery County Public Schools.

WDC urges the passage of HB14. This bill will improve the ability of school administrations to understand and address bullying and harassment by requiring more detailed data collection on the personal characteristics targeted during these incidents.

As a junior at Walt Whitman High School, I have seen firsthand how hate and bias can affect a school community. In recent years, our school has experienced a large increase in incidents of anti-religious vandalism and hate speech, with the most recent incident occurring only a few months ago in January 2026. These incidents targeted the identities of my classmates, creating a climate of fear and exclusion and making students feel unsafe in what is supposed to be a learning environment. When students feel targeted for things they cannot change, it becomes increasingly difficult to focus on their education and participate in school communities.

While our school administration responds to these specific events, the current reporting system often fails to capture the details of identity-driven harassment that can occur in a school environment. By grouping different races, religions, and sexual orientations into broad categories, the data fails to show the specific reasons why certain students are being targeted. This lack of data makes it difficult for administrations to implement the necessary measures to protect marginalized groups and address the root causes of bias.

HB14 is essential because it ensures the data is more detailed, allowing it to provide the information needed to hold our school systems accountable. This allows administrators to implement effective strategies to foster a truly safe and inclusive environment for every student.

We ask for your support for HB14 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Camille
DiGiovanni
WDC NextGen

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair

HB 0014 Favorable Bullying Reporting.pdf

Uploaded by: Dave Faby

Position: FAV

David Faby
3702 Denton Court
Abingdon MD 21009
3.30.2026

Dear Chairperson Wilkins and Vice-Chair Feldmark,

HB0014 is essential to helping Maryland schools become the safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment we seek for all students. On behalf of the Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group (HoCoJAG), I am writing to respectfully request a favorable report from your committee.

In 2024 and in 2025, Jewish citizens of Howard County were more likely to experience hate and bias incidents than any other group (per HCPD data). FBI hate crime statistics also show that Jews are the group most likely to experience hate bias crimes in Maryland and that Maryland is the fifth worst state in the nation in this regard.

The US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, under the Biden administration, investigated the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and issued a report (see link below) identifying a wide range of concerns, stating in their summary that:

“Specifically, OCR is concerned that the evidence produced to date suggests that a hostile environment likely existed for Jewish students in the School System but because – as the School System acknowledged in the course of this investigation – the School System did not assess whether any incidents reported to it during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year created or contributed to a hostile environment based on shared Jewish ancestry, the School System likely did not take steps necessary to redress any such hostile environment.”

The failure to recognize and track incidents of antisemitic bullying, harassment, and intimidation has resulted in a hostile environment for Jewish students in many schools and school systems across Maryland. Ensuring that schools recognize, track, and report incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, against Jews as against any group, is essential to compliance with Title VI. HB0014 will help ensure that Maryland school systems comply with civil rights law and that Jewish students as well as students of all backgrounds, have equal access to education free of a hostile environment.

Please vote Favorable and support HB 0014

Thank You

Written Support for HB 14.pdf

Uploaded by: Eboni Burch

Position: FAV

March 30, 2026

BILL: HB 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

RE: Written Testimony in Support of HB 14

Dear Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to express my **strong support for HB 14**. This bill is critically important because the current measures in place within school districts to address bullying, harassment, and student safety are not sufficient to ensure consistent protection for all students.

While policies may exist on paper, the implementation of safety plans and follow-up procedures is often inconsistent. In many cases, there is a lack of meaningful follow-up after incidents are reported, failure to adequately implement safety plans, and insufficient communication with parents. Parents are not always included in the development of safety plans, despite being essential partners in ensuring student safety and well-being. Without consistent follow-up and accountability, safety plans become procedural documents rather than effective tools for protecting students.

When bullying and harassment are not adequately addressed, the impact extends beyond the immediate incident and significantly affects a student's psychological safety. Students who do not feel psychologically safe at school often experience increased anxiety, fear, school avoidance, decreased academic performance, and difficulty concentrating. Over time, repeated exposure to bullying without effective intervention can lead to emotional distress, loss of trust in adults, and a belief that the school environment is not safe or supportive. A student cannot fully access their education if they do not feel safe enough to learn.

This issue is particularly concerning for students with disabilities. Children with disabilities are at greater risk for bullying and harassment due to their differences, social challenges, behavioral differences, or learning needs. Despite this increased risk, there are often no additional safeguards in place to protect these students, and bullying can sometimes be misinterpreted as behavior problems rather than a safety concern. When this happens, the student who is being bullied may be disciplined

rather than protected, which further compounds the harm and further damages the student's psychological safety and trust in the school system.

HB 14 represents an important step toward strengthening accountability, improving follow-up procedures, ensuring parent involvement in safety planning, and requiring schools to take bullying and harassment seriously as a student safety issue. This bill helps ensure that safety plans are not only created, but implemented, monitored, and revised as needed, with appropriate oversight and parent involvement.

All students deserve to feel safe at school, both physically and psychologically. No child should have to endure bullying or harassment without meaningful intervention and protection from the adults responsible for their care and education. HB 14 helps move us closer to a system where student safety is treated as a priority and where schools are held accountable for protecting vulnerable students.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 14.**

Respectfully submitted,

Eboni Burch, Psy.D.

HB 14- FAV- MJLC Statement.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

FAVORABLE

HB14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

April 1 , 2026

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, **strongly supports** HB 14 as a 2026 caucus priority, requiring public schools to report bullying by personal characteristic and ensuring the collection of accurate data on antisemitic bullying. **This legislation would not only help protect Jewish students, but would also gather data for all, whether it be based on religion, sex, race, national origin, or other protected categories.**

HB 14 aligns strongly with MLJC's mission of protecting Maryland's Jewish families and students across the state. Hate-motivated incidents and targeted acts of violence continue to rise, both in our neighborhoods and in our schools. This bill will help counties gather data on the levels of antisemitic bullying to spread awareness and foster change in our communities, as no one should feel unsafe and attending school shouldn't be an act of courage.

Transparency in making this data publicly available is the first step in combatting harmful discriminatory treatment, as we cannot properly address issues without necessary measurements and tracking. When parents and community leaders have access to this information from county websites, they will be better equipped to advocate for targeted interventions that foster safer and more inclusive school environments.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 14.

Senate FAV_Del. Foley_HB14 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Foley

Position: FAV

LINDA FOLEY
Legislative District 15
Montgomery County

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair, Non-Energy Utilities
Subcommittee



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Linda.Foley@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony: HB14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Hearing Date: April 1, 2026

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill today.

I am Delegate Foley, and I am presenting HB14, which amends existing law to ensure hate-bias incident data that is already being reported by K-12 public school systems will now be broken down by targeted victim groups and posted on a school system's website. HB14 passed the House in a bipartisan vote, 123-6.

Currently, state law requires school systems to have a hate-bias reporting form. While these forms vary by school system, they ultimately provide information on the perceived nature of bias incidents along with other information about the alleged incidents. This information is ultimately compiled in aggregate and sent to different entities, including the Attorney General's office, which issues an annual statewide report.

However, when the information gets to the Attorney General's office, it is expressed as a percentage of total bullying and harassment incidents, rather than in raw numbers. The Office of the Attorney General indicated that it is sometimes challenging for their office to get these numbers — they aren't readily available to the public.

The bill before you would simply cause school systems to disaggregate the information they have collected and report the raw numbers of hate-bias incidents broken down by targeted victim groups. In other words, a school system's report — which can be as simple as one page or a chart — would show the raw number of antisemitic, anti-black, anti-lgbtq+, misogynistic, anti-immigrant, and other hate incidents, for example.

Montgomery County Public Schools is one school system that makes these data points available. Other school systems do not report these numbers in a way that's easily accessible to the public.

In 2024, there were 291 school-related hate incidents, roughly 1.6 per school day, in Montgomery County. Notably, of the 291 school-related bias incident reports, 60 incidents involved a swastika, and 16 included references to Hitler and/or the Nazi salute. In Montgomery County Public Schools, 43% of 2024 hate incidents targeted Black students. From August 2023 to March 2024, 10% of hate-bias incidents in Montgomery County Public Schools targeted LGBTQ+ students.

All school systems have this data. This bill would require them to break it down by targeted victim groups and post it on their websites. The timeline for posting this data fits in with the existing timeline that school systems already must abide by.

To be clear, these reports would contain raw numbers by system. There would not be any identifying personal information or a school-by-school breakdown.

We've been grateful to get input with various stakeholders in drafting this bill, including the Office of the Attorney General, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Baltimore Jewish Council, ADL, the Maryland Center for School Safety, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, former President of the Montgomery County Board of Education Julie Yang, the Maryland Civil Rights Commission, State Police, MSEA, and others.

Those discussions did not reveal any opposition to this bill. All agreed that having this information is useful and needed. It would help school systems better direct resources to combat hate of various groups; would enable parents and community members to have easily accessible information regarding hate in their school system; and overall would reveal what type of hate is occurring in our school systems.

This bill is endorsed by the legislative Latino Caucus, Jewish Caucus, LGBTQ+ Caucus, AAPI Caucus, and Women's Caucus and has other support you will hear and read about today.

The bill was amended in the House before its ultimate passage, however I understand there are amendments which a member of this committee is proposing which would amend the bill to be closer to its original intent which myself and our advocates fully support.

The proposed amendments before this committee are important because they ensure Maryland moves in the right direction in terms of proper data collection. Without them, the law would include undefined phrases such as "substantial increase" which will offer little insight into hate-bias trends -- positive or negative -- that our school systems are facing. As the bill's original sponsor, I support these amendments.

We also don't just want to see if a school system has an increase, but also a decrease in incidents. Decrease in hate-bias incidents is something to celebrate and we should know when those are happening. Again, this is about getting accurate and disaggregated data to make effective policy and program decisions to counter specific forms of hate-bias incidents in our schools.

This bill has wide support from stakeholders on all sides of this issue. The bill simply amends existing law. It fits in seamlessly with existing practices without adding an excessive burden to school administrators. Having this data is another step in ensuring our school systems are safer for all.

I urge a favorable report on HB14, and I am happy to answer any questions.

HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Har

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY
JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: 3/30/2026

RE: HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying,
Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collecting and
Reporting Requirements

The MLLC supports HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collecting and Reporting Requirements

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0014.

Hate-bias incidents in schools across the nation continue to increase. As a result, it is important that Maryland has the necessary data required to track and understand the landscape. In 2024, about 10% of nationwide reported hate crime offenses occurred in school. 15% of nationwide hate crime offenses motivated by race, ethnicity, or ancestry targeted Hispanic or Latino individuals.

Currently, data from schools is collected via hate-bias reporting forms, but is not then disaggregated by the targeted victim group. This makes it difficult to understand the actual raw number of incidents reported. Under this legislation, school systems will be required to categorize and publish hate-bias incident data by the targeted victim group on the school system's website. The bill ties neatly into existing law to ensure it is nonburdensome to school systems by using readily available information that is already being collected, but not sufficiently reported.

This legislation is a crucial step toward addressing hate-bias incidents targeting Latino and Hispanic students across Maryland. By making this data publicly accessible, all stakeholders can ensure that all students are learning in safe and supportive environments.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0014.

HB0014 - crossover bill - FAV - Bullying Informati

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0014_Crossover_Bill_Richard
Kaplowitz_FAV 04/01/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#0014- POSITION:
FAVORABLE

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

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 crossover bill HB#0014, **County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

To develop targeted strategies to deal with bullying, harassment or intimidation in our schools it requires we identify who is most affected by these actions. The collection of this data is not currently occurring; this bill is a remedy to that lack of information.

This bill serves to alter the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation form to require, if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, the identification of those personal characteristics, if known; etc.

The Peoples Law Library of Maryland is an excellent resource on these problems.¹ The Kennedy-Kreiger Institute also has a study on this problem.² The National Bullying Prevention Center has some horrifying statistics about the issue.³

This bill will permit Maryland to tackle the problem with clear information on the dimensions of this misconduct occurring in our schools.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on crossover bill HB#0014.

¹ <https://www.peoples-law.org/bullying>

² <https://www.kennedykrieger.org/sites/default/files/library/documents/patient-care/centers-and-programs/center-for-autism-and-related-disorders/bullying-harassment-intimidation-students-maryland-public-schools.pdf>

³ <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/stats/>

FreeState_Justice_FAVORABLE_HB0014.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronnie Taylor

Position: FAV



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BALTIMORE, MD 21218
TEL 410) 625-LGBT (5428)
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www.freestate-justice.org

Monday, March 30, 2026

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 0014 – County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements
Position: Favorable

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

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Community Impact Director at FreeState Justice. I am submitting this testimony to strongly support House Bill 0014.

HB0014 addresses a fundamental flaw in how we handle bullying in Maryland schools. Currently, we record incidents but lack understanding of their causes or who is most affected. This bill improves that by requiring schools to identify when bullying is linked to actual or perceived personal characteristics and to report this data in a clear and meaningful way.

Students already tell us that bullying is often based on identity. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that students ages 12 to 18 identify bullying related to race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other characteristics. Ignoring these details by treating all incidents the same overlooks what students themselves are reporting.

The burden is unevenly distributed. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that about 40% of transgender and questioning students faced bullying at school, and approximately 26% attempted suicide in the past year.

GLSEN research shows a similar pattern in Maryland. Most LGBTQ students experience anti-LGBTQ bullying. Over half face verbal harassment based on sexual orientation, and many experience physical harassment related to gender identity.

Maryland-specific findings also reveal underreporting and unsafe school climates. State research and the Governor’s Commission recognize that many LGBTQ students do not report incidents and that school environments stay hostile. This indicates current data systems are incomplete and do not fully capture the extent of harm.

HB0014 aligns with how civil rights data is already collected at the federal level. The U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection gathers and disaggregates school climate data by race, sex, disability, and other characteristics. It

LEADERSHIP TEAM

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University of Maryland School of Law
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Sweet Spot Baltimore

At FreeState Justice, we envision a Maryland where LGBTQ+ people live openly with the dignity they deserve. Facing discrimination shouldn't keep anyone from being themselves. Through pro bono legal services, policy advocacy, resource connections, and community support, FreeState works to break down those barriers so all Marylanders can thrive.

also tracks harassment based on sexual orientation and other protected classes. This bill brings Maryland in line with established practice.

Research supports this approach. StopBullying.gov confirms that strong policies and targeted interventions reduce bullying. Peer-reviewed studies and recent meta-analyses show that policies addressing sexual orientation and gender identity are linked to lower victimization and increased school safety.

HB0014 also safeguards student privacy. It mandates aggregate reporting and clearly forbids publishing any information that could identify a student. It maintains report form data as confidential and keeps it out of permanent educational records.

The policy case is simple. You can't fix what you don't measure. The National Academies have identified bullying as a major issue affecting student well-being and stress the need for better data to understand patterns and outcomes.

This bill provides Maryland with the tools to identify disparities, implement targeted interventions, and hold systems accountable. It does not add a new burden; it brings clarity.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 0014.

In Community,



Ronnie L. Taylor

Sources:

1. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/a10>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/yrbs/>
3. <https://glisten.org/research/>
4. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>
5. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
6. <https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/IOM-BCYF-14-09/publication/23482>

HB0014-Education-Bullying, Harassment, & Intimidat

Uploaded by: S. Spencer Dove

Position: FAV



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

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**Education and
Outreach Director**
Candice Crenshaw

April 1, 2026

House Bill 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements **Position: Support**

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

House Bill 14 requires every local school board to post annually on a prominent location on their websites information about the number of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation reported to the State Board of Education. Under current law, the school boards are already required to report this information to the State Board when it is determined that the incident is motivated by the actual or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or group – such as an individual’s or group’s **race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability**¹. The posted data must be disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic.

Since calendar year 2022, the Maryland State Police (“MSP”) reports that hate bias incidents in Maryland schools have increased at extraordinary rates – from 90 reports in 2022 to 326 reports in both 2023 and 2024². These official reports mirror allegations of discrimination, hate, and bias occurring in Maryland’s schools that can be found across social media and in the news. Within the school setting, these hate bias incidents oftentimes manifest as bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents within the school community.

¹ **Bolded attributes** identify overlap with the protected classes within the laws MCCR enforces.

² Of these submitted reports, verified reports totaled 10 in 2022, 24 in 2023, and 39 in 2024. Additionally, all of this data can be found in both MSP’s annual Hate Bias Report and MCCR’s Annual Report.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

MCCR supports HB14 because the reporting of accurate and complete data by Maryland schools will enable education and policy leaders to formulate sound public policy – based on facts – that will directly address the underlying reasons behind the increase in reports to law enforcement. Additionally, Marylanders deserve to have a complete picture of what is happening in their local schools so that they can work with educational leaders and policymakers to enact meaningful change that protects our students while fostering access to opportunity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB14. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

HB14-SaanRhyne.pdf

Uploaded by: Saan Rhyne

Position: FAV

HB14 Written Testimony - Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (4/1 at 1:00 p.m.)

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Baltimore County Student Councils

Saan Rhyne - Eastern Technical High School Student

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

My name is Saan Rhyne and I am a student from Baltimore County. I write to you on behalf of students in Maryland to request a favorable report on House Bill 14.

House Bill 14 alters the statewide mandated bullying and harassment reporting form to require documentation of personal characteristics, such as race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability, which could have motivated the incident. This will allow school administrators to find trends and other factors influencing harassment incidents.

Comprehensive reporting data enables educators and policymakers to develop evidence-based anti-bullying programs and implementations that are responsive to student experiences. Bullying and harassment makes students feel unsafe and unwelcome at their own schools, especially when motivated by personal characteristics. To prioritize education, we must first prioritize ensuring students are in classrooms and ready to learn.

This bill will have no fiscal effect on the state, but will have an incredibly beneficial impact on Maryland students. Discrimination has no place in our state, and especially not in our schools. Young minds are impressionable, and bullying and harassment is linked to doubling rates of anxiety and depression among youth. Every child deserves an educational environment in which they feel respected for their culture and beliefs.

While concerns have been expressed regarding the publication of this data and potential for manipulation of this data to target school systems, it is still important to publicize this data. Transparency and accepting areas to improve is a key component of improving our school systems. Data can be shared on the same page as information regarding methods school systems are taking to mitigate bullying incidents.

It is imperative that all students feel safe in their schools and classes. By analyzing underlying patterns behind bullying, school systems can better remediate these issues and create safer learning experiences for all students. Accordingly, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB14 from the committee. Thank you for your time.

HB 14 Support Written Testimony Uma Chivvis.pdf

Uploaded by: Uma Chivvis

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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HB14: County Boards of Education, Energy and the Environment - Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation-Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

**Education, Energy and Environment - April 1, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC) for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. I am a member of the WDC's Next Generation and a student in Montgomery County Public Schools.

We urge the passage of HB 14 County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements with Senator Brooks' amendment. This change will ensure that reporting on bullying, harassment, and intimidation is disaggregated and reported each year—and that this specific data is available on county board websites.

It is crucial that school administrations properly understand the identity-based bullying and harassment that students in their schools too often face. Improving data collection is an extremely important first step to doing so. The current report combines reporting on all races and ethnicities, all religions, and all sexual orientations into one. This grouping makes it harder to determine the specific ways in which students may be targeted for their identities. HB14 will enable the collection of better, more specific data on the personal characteristics targeted by bullying and harassment.

According to the most recent Maryland State Department of Education Report on Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation, incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation in Montgomery County have increased by 40% since the pandemic. As a junior attending Walt Whitman High School, a public Montgomery County school, this statistic is shocking.

At my school, incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation are more common than administrators realize. People are targeted for their religion, race, and gender. This year, for example, there have already been a number of anti-semitic and Islamophobic incidents, reaching the level of obscene language and even death threats. As a student at the school, this is deeply concerning. Schools should be a place for learning and community, not a place where students fear harassment due to their personal identity. However, the current data fails to tell us who is targeted. By aggregating all data together, we risk failing to see which specific identities are being targeted most. When things are getting worse for a specific community, you cannot



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

tell.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are also driving factors when it comes to chronic absenteeism. When students are specifically targeted for their identity, they are much less likely to consistently attend school. Alongside these school absences, this kind of bullying and harassment also contributes to mental health issues, especially when they are being targeted for things they can't change. Experts from the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* state that for this bullying to stop, the underlying causes must be clearly identified.

This bill is a crucial step towards ensuring the ability of schools to intervene in bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents. By passing this bill and disaggregating this data, we move towards safer schools and higher attendance for Maryland.

We ask for your support for HB 14 with Senator Brooks' amendment and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Uma Chivvis, Montgomery County Public School Student
Chair, Women's Democratic Club Next Generation

HB 14..pdf

Uploaded by: Womens Caucus

Position: FAV

DEL. DANA JONES, DISTRICT 30A
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1st Vice-President

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DEL. JACQUELINE T. ADDISON, DISTRICT 45
At Large

DEL. KYM TAYLOR, DISTRICT 23
At Large

WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 30, 2026

To Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair

Senator Cheryl C. Kagan Vice Chair

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our support for HB 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.

HB 14 strengthens existing law by adding a clear reporting requirement to Education Article § 7-424. Specifically, the bill requires school systems to categorize and publish hate-bias incident data by targeted victim group. Importantly, this legislation does not create a new data collection burden; rather, it ensures that information already being gathered is reported in a transparent, accessible, and meaningful way. By requiring this data to be clearly posted on school system websites, HB 14 promotes accountability and informed policymaking.

The bill's reporting requirements include hate incidents based on sex and gender identity, providing critical visibility into incidents targeting women and students who identify as women. Without disaggregated and publicly accessible data, it is difficult for legislators, educators, parents, and community stakeholders to fully understand the scope and nature of hate-bias incidents occurring in our schools.

For the Maryland Women's Caucus, this legislation aligns directly with our mission to protect and advance the well-being of women and girls across the state. Transparency is foundational to equity. When data is accessible and clearly reported, it empowers school systems and policymakers to respond effectively, allocate resources appropriately, and ensure that learning environments are safe and supportive for all students.

HB 14 is a practical and measured step toward addressing hate-bias incidents and strengthening protections for vulnerable student populations. By making existing data transparent and accessible, Maryland can better ensure that students—particularly girls and those who identify as women—are able to learn free from harassment and intimidation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 14.

HB14 - FWA Senate Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FWA



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- Beth Tfiloh Congregation
- Bnai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region
- Bnai Israel Congregation
- Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation
- Bolton Street Synagogue
- Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
- Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
- Chizuk Amuno Congregation
- Congregation Beir Tikvah
- Congregation Tiferes Yisroel
- Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland
- Hadassah
- Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation
- J Street
- Jewish Federation of Howard County
- Jewish Labor Committee
- Jewish War Veterans
- Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary
- Jewish Women International
- Jews For Judaism
- Moses Montefiore Anshe Emenah Hebrew Congregation
- National Council of Jewish Women
- Ner Tamid Congregation
- Rabbinical Council of America
- Religious Zionists of America
- Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
- Shomrei Emenah Congregation
- Suburban Orthodox Congregation
- Temple Beth Shalom
- Temple Isaiah
- Zionist Organization of America Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee | April 1, 2026

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Background: House Bill 14 as amended in the House fails to properly execute the intended goal of the bill – which would require our 24 jurisdictions to report certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation data, if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by certain actual or perceived personal characteristics, identification of those personal characteristics.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, as well as the organized Jewish Community of Baltimore. Every child deserves to learn without fear of harassment or intimidation. The goal of this bill is to improve how schools collect and understand data on bullying so that educators and policymakers can identify patterns, target interventions, and cultivate safer, more inclusive learning environments.

Unfortunately, as amended in the House, the bill has become much less effective. We are grateful to the bill sponsor for sitting down with us and working out what we believe would be sufficient amendments to respect some of the changes that the House made while also maintaining the integrity of the bill. **We strongly recommend the adoption of the following amendment – which would remove lines 24-28 on page 4:**

~~24 (I) THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN INCIDENTS
25 OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP
26 OVER THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR; OR
27 (II) THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENT RATE OF
28 BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP.~~

These additions from the House substantially limit the impact of the original bill, specifically because there are no legal definitions of "substantial increase" or "disproportionate incident." These terms leave the bill subject to the interpretation, allowing our County Boards to choose not to participate, thus rendering the bill ineffective.

As the state continues to evolve its curriculum, and recognizing that in the past two legislative sessions this body has passed laws requiring Anti-Bias Training in our school systems and County Boards of Education, this data can help to assess the effectiveness of these changes and where there is a need for future adjustments. **For these reasons, we urge a Favorable report with the acceptance of this amendment on HB14.** We thank Sen. Brooks for having this prepared, and for his support in maintaining the integrity of the bill.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

Letter of Support HB014 2026 3_30_2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Alita-Geri Carter

Position: FWA



www.qualequityaccess.com
tc4health@gmail.com

March 30, 2026

BILL: HB 14 – County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

COMMITTEE: EEE

POSITION: Support with Amendment

RE: Statement of Support with Amendment

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 14** with public reporting requirements to support meaningful transparency and accountability. This legislation addresses a critical need for data-driven transparency regarding the safety and well-being of students in Maryland's public schools.

As someone deeply invested in the rights and safety of students, highlighting those who are most vulnerable, those with disabilities. Data tells a story and this type of data will support awareness of areas of improvement concerning inclusion and belonging. HB 14 strengthens our state's response to these incidents in vital ways if written with transparency and accountability in mind:

1. **Mandatory Identification of Bias:** By requiring that report forms specifically indicate whether an incident was motivated by actual or perceived personal characteristics, such as physical or mental disability, the bill ensures that we are tracking targeted harassment rather than just general conflict. It also ensures that targeted action plans can be created to address the identified bias.
2. **Public Accountability:** The requirement is vital and as originally written was for county boards to post disaggregated data on their websites ensures that parents, advocates, and lawmakers can see exactly which groups of students are being targeted. This public reporting is essential for holding local school systems accountable for their school climates.
3. **Community Participation for Improvement:** When data is made publicly available, members of the community can access it and support transformation efforts. As an advocate and community member, I often contribute to strategic planning for quality improvement on a voluntary basis. By not requiring this data to be publicly available, the legislation creates an opportunity for gatekeeping. I personally have spent nearly two years working with the Office of the Attorney General due to inappropriate and illegal refusals involved with MPIAs from school districts.



www.qualequityaccess.com

tc4health@gmail.com

This bill does not just collect more data; it collects the *right* data to allow for targeted interventions and systemic improvements. It is an essential step toward ensuring every child, regardless of their personal characteristics, can learn in an environment free from intimidation.

I respectfully urge a Favorable report with amendment as discussed on HB 14.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, RN, CPNP-PC, BCPA, PMP

Resident, Howard County, MD

HB0014_FWA_HoCoJAG_Proposed_Amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: David Albert

Position: FWA



HoCo JAG

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

House Bill 0014 (2026 Session)
Proposed Amendments
Submitted by: Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

Purpose

These amendments clarify reporting requirements to ensure consistent, objective, and comprehensive tracking of bias-based incidents, in alignment with federal civil rights obligations.

Amendment 1 – Remove Conditional Reporting Threshold

Page 4, Line 23: Strike “, IF”

Amendment 2 – Eliminate Subjective Reporting Criteria

Page 4, Lines 24–28: Strike (e)(3)(I) and (e)(3)(II) in their entirety

Amendment 3 – Require Disaggregated Reporting

Page 5, Line 2: After subsection (f), insert:
“DISAGGREGATED BY THE MOTIVATING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC.”

Effect of Amendments

These amendments remove subjective thresholds, ensure all bias-based incidents are reported consistently, require categorization by motivating characteristic, and strengthen compliance with federal civil rights law, including Title VI.

Requested Committee Action: FWA – Favorable With Amendments

HB0014_FWA_HoCoJAG_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: David Albert

Position: FWA



HoCo JAG

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

Favorable with Amendments

House Bill 0014

Hearing Date: April 1, 2026

Submitted by the Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

Before the Maryland Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Summary

House Bill 0014 ensures that Maryland school systems meet their obligations under federal civil rights law by requiring consistent tracking and reporting of bias-based bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Recent federal findings in Howard County demonstrate that absent such systems, schools may fail to identify and remedy hostile environments affecting protected student groups.

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group (HoCoJAG), we respectfully request a **favorable report on HB0014 with the amendments outlined below**.

A [recent investigation](#) by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) into the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) provides a clear and highly relevant example of the problem this bill is designed to address. OCR found that:

“...the evidence produced to date suggests that a hostile environment likely existed for Jewish students in the School System but because ... the School System did not assess whether any incidents reported to it ... created or contributed to a hostile environment ... the School System likely did not take steps necessary to redress any such hostile environment.”

This finding is not merely procedural—it is substantive. Incidents were occurring, but because they were not systematically evaluated as bias-based or assessed collectively, the school system failed to recognize the existence of a hostile environment.

This illustrates a critical failure mode:

- incidents are reported
- but not categorized as bias-based
- not aggregated across time or context
- and therefore not recognized as constituting a civil rights violation

Without structured tracking and analysis, even well-intentioned school systems can fail to meet their Title VI obligations.

The OCR findings are particularly instructive because they do not hinge on the absence of incidents—but rather on the failure to identify patterns and meaningfully assess them.

Antisemitism further complicates this problem. It is often expressed indirectly or in coded forms, including targeting students based on global events or identity-linked rhetoric. Without explicit categorization and tracking, such incidents are frequently misclassified or treated as isolated events rather than part of a broader pattern.

This is not a mandate to label or categorize students—it is a requirement to accurately identify and track incidents in order to meet existing civil rights obligations.

Available data reinforces the urgency. According to FBI hate crime data and Maryland reporting, Jews experience hate-bias incidents at the highest per-capita rate of any identifiable group, both in Maryland and nationally, despite representing a small percentage of the population. These patterns are consistent with the OCR’s findings and demonstrate that this is not an isolated issue.

Of particular concern, HCPSS did not respond to OCR’s findings by implementing a clear mechanism to track antisemitism as a distinct category in its reporting systems. This underscores the need for statewide standards to ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance across all school systems.

Concerns with Current Reporting Thresholds

While HB0014 is an important step forward, its effectiveness is limited by provisions that condition reporting on:

- a “substantial increase” in incidents, or
- a “disproportionate” level of incidents

These thresholds introduce subjectivity and create the risk that serious incidents will not be reported unless they meet undefined criteria.

More fundamentally, they reflect a flawed premise: civil rights compliance should not depend on whether harm reaches a particular volume or comparative threshold.

The OCR findings in Howard County demonstrate that failure occurs precisely when incidents are not consistently tracked and evaluated—regardless of whether they meet arbitrary thresholds.

Requested Amendments

To ensure that HB0014 fully addresses the issues identified in the OCR investigation, we respectfully request:

- Page 4, Line 23 – Delete “, IF”
- Page 4, Lines 24–28 – Delete (e)(3)(I) and (II)
- Page 5, Line 2 – Insert:
“, DISAGGREGATED BY THE MOTIVATING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC.”

These amendments ensure that:

- all bias-based incidents are captured
 - data is consistently categorized
 - and patterns can be identified before they escalate into systemic violations
-

Conclusion

The OCR findings in Howard County provide a clear, real-world example of how gaps in tracking and analysis can result in failure to protect students under federal civil rights law.

HB0014 directly addresses this gap. With the proposed amendments, it will ensure that Maryland school systems:

- identify bias-based incidents accurately
- recognize patterns early
- and take appropriate corrective action

Without consistent data, there is no accountability. Without accountability, there is no effective protection.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **favorable report with amendments**—because civil rights protections are only meaningful when they are consistently enforced.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

David Albert

5000 Thayer Center, Suite C

Oakland, MD 21550

david.albert@hocojag.org

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<https://hocojag.org>

HB14 Favorable with Amendment 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FWA

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Bill 14
Favorable with Amendment

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

Please give House Bill 14, regarding the collection and reporting of bullying, harassment, and intimidation by the county boards of education, a favorable report with an amendment (as described below.)

It's important to identify the prevalence of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of students based on personal characteristics so that any trends can be noted for further interventions. This information should be posted on the county board websites so that the community, especially parents of students, can be informed.

I respectfully request an amendment to this bill to strike the part that calls for a "substantial increase," both because "substantial" is undefined, and because information about any amount of bullying (etc.) based on personal characteristics should be collected and reported.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

HB 14 County Boards of Education – Bullying, Haras

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FWA



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 14 with Amendments -
County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation –
Information Collection and Reporting
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 1, 2026**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish social service agencies, synagogues, and schools throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on mutual respect, justice, equity and safety. We work throughout the region to advocate for our nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis and to campaign for policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC also runs a robust education division which focuses on combatting school-based antisemitism and promoting safe, hate-free, learning environments for all students. House Bill 14 is critically important to us as it mandates that county boards post data on their websites about incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that are motivated by race, religion, or national origin.

We support HB 14 with amendments to ensure its strength, effectiveness and purpose. Specifically, we request that language be removed that significantly reduces the impact of the legislation including “substantial increase” and “disproportionate incident” (see page 4, lines 24-48). These are not legally defined terms which give county boards latitude **not** to collect this data. We need to ensure that school boards will follow through on the bill’s intent to report incidents of bias motivated bullying.

Hate-motivated incidents in K-12 schools are a serious problem with school-based antisemitism skyrocketing since October 7th. The absence of publicly available data breaking down which incidents are most prevalent and which communities are most targeted hinders efforts to keep students safe. The JCRC recently held a town hall with the Montgomery County Public School Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Taylor. He noted that a lack of credible data and chronic underreporting inhibits schools’ abilities to successfully address antisemitism and all forms of hatred.

Passage of this bill will help school systems implement strategies that more effectively target these disturbing hateful incidents. Every child deserves the fundamental right to an education free from harassment, bullying and intimidation. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report with amendments on House Bill 14.

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EzraTowne_HB0014_FAVwAM_2026_0330 (EEE).pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FWA

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

Testimony Favorable to HB0014: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

March 30, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. **I am writing to you today to ask you to vote favorably, with amendment, on HB0014.**

HB0014 standardizes and improves the bullying, harassment, and intimidation forms that school boards of education compile and report on to add the concrete reasons for the bullying, harassment, and intimidation to include: race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability.

Many school districts within Maryland already compile this information, but not all of them do. In fact some of the district school boards lump all bullying, harassment, and intimidation into a single category - leaving no accountability for school districts to address the most prevalent forms of such incidents.

I am a transgender person, with two children in Montgomery County Public Schools. If my children were bullied, harassed or intimidated because their parent is transgender, I would want the form that the school board assembles to indicate that. Luckily, I live in a county that does just that.

In addition, because the school district compiles their data including the reasons for bullying, etc. I can make an educated guess about whether or not my children would be safe attending school in a particular district. And in Montgomery County, I can even see data on each individual school because it is released each year as part of their School Climate Surveys.

HB0014 was recently amended to require a substantial increase of discrimination in these incidents in order to require reporting on all categories of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. It does so without defining what a substantial increase would be. Additionally, having accurate information about the reasons for these incidents is critical to recognizing the very trends the original bill reporting aims to enable.

I want all school districts in Maryland to be fully accountable to all parents and students.. **It is for this reason that I ask for a favorable vote with amendment on HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

Sincerely,
Ezra MacLeod Towne
Wheaton, D18

HB 14 in Senate EEE FWA 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaden Farris

Position: FWA



BILL: HB 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

DATE: April 1, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Glisten(formerly GLSEN) Maryland, the state chapter of the largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K–12 education, supports HB 627. For more than 34 years, our organization has worked to ensure that every student can learn in safe, inclusive, and affirming school environments. The passage of this bill will help foster safe educational settings for all Marylanders by creating processes for accountability and transparency for acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ youth.

Research by GLSEN National¹ finds that **LGBTQ+ students experience high rates of bullying, harassment, and intimidation**, with 83% reporting feeling unsafe at school. **LGBTQ+ students of color are most likely to experience bullying, harassment, and intimidation** at school.

Experiencing a hostile school climate is associated with greater rates of absenteeism, lower GPA, lower graduation rates, and being less likely to go on to college (GLSEN, 2021). Thus, **it is in the best interest of students and our broader community to create supportive school climates for LGBTQ+ youth.**

Creating clear bullying, harassment, and intimidation reporting mechanisms which are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students provide an opportunity for Maryland school systems to document these incidents in our public schools. Making data on the number of reports received publicly available ensures that parents and guardians have critical information about the climate in their children's schools.

Perhaps most importantly, **collecting information on bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ students in schools serves a preventative function, working to improve school climate.** Further research also finds that school policies which explicitly protect LGBTQIA+ youth are safer for LGBTQIA+ students

¹ Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

in comparison to schools with generic anti-bullying and harassment policies².

Accordingly, Glisten Maryland respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB 14, and strongly urges the committee to return the legislation as closely as possible to its original form to preserve its intent and effectiveness.

ABOUT GLISTEN:

Glisten (previously GLSEN), the nation's largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K-12 education, has been dedicated to establishing inclusive schools and learning environments for over 34 years. Amidst increasing threats against LGBTQ+ youth nationwide, Glisten actively addresses harassment and discrimination by empowering educators, advocating for policy changes, and combating book bans.

² Kull, Ryan & Greytak, Emily & Kosciw, Joseph & Villenas, Christian. (2016). Effectiveness of School District Antibullying Policies in Improving LGBT Youths' School Climate. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. 3. 407-415. 10.1037/sgd0000196.

2026-4-1 HB14 (FWA).pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Frederick

Position: FWA

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
EQUITY, POLICY & ENGAGEMENT

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staffs

JENNIFER FREDERICK
Assistant Attorney General

April 1, 2026

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Jennifer Frederick, Assistant Attorney General
Counsel, Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention
Executive Division, Maryland Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or
Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements -
Favorable with Amendments

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports House Bill 14, County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements, sponsored by Delegate Foley, with the amendments described below. As amended, HB 14 requires the reporting of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation motivated by personal characteristics only if there has been a change in the number of incidents from the year prior or if there is disproportionate number of incidents for students within that group.

The OAG commends Delegate Foley for continuing to advance legislation that strengthens Maryland's response to hate bias incidents in our schools. The bill takes meaningful steps forward toward combatting hate bias in Maryland schools before it becomes criminal conduct. However, we respectfully request an amendment to restore the bill's language to the language of the bill as introduced.

The Bill as Amended

As amended, § 7-424(e)(3) of the Education Article will require a county board to include personal-characteristic-disaggregated incident data in its annual report to the State Board *only* when a condition is met. The result is that if a county board is experiencing persistent but steady bias-motivated bullying against a protected group, the county board would *not* be required to report that data since there hasn't been a change in the number of incidents from the year prior.

This makes year-to-year comparisons nearly impossible and the State Board, the OAG, and the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention would receive an incomplete and inconsistent picture of hate bias in Maryland schools.

Benefits of Reporting in The Bill as Introduced

The bill as introduced required county boards to report, and post publicly, information about *all* incidents determined to be motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic, disaggregated by the motivating characteristic annually. This requirement would have resulted in more data being reported and thus allowing for more targeted policymaking and recommendations around addressing hate in schools in a way that benefits the whole community in a way that the amended version does not.

HB 14 as currently drafted would not create a consistent way to share how prevalent hate bias incidents are in schools without involving law enforcement for non-criminal activity because schools would not necessarily report the same data every year. Currently, the only official mechanism for monitoring hate across the state is to report it to law enforcement, which means that school faculty and staff are less likely to make an official report of a hate bias incident when it requires further disruption to the classroom setting and time spent reporting for already busy education professionals. By creating a pathway for schools to consistently share data on hate bias incidents in the original draft of HB 14, education professionals will be able to use mechanisms already available to them without creating an additional requirement to report all hate bias incidents and without needing to report to local law enforcement. This would create clearer data on acts of hate as required in the original draft, and thus all of Maryland would have a better understanding of what an act of hate looks like in our schools.

Conclusion

To ensure effective implementation and alignment with the OAG's dedication to addressing hate based on as accurate data as possible, we respectfully recommend HB 14 be amended to reflect the language of the bill as originally introduced. By returning to the language in the bill as introduced, this legislation would provide schools, the OAG, the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention, and the State with more consistently accurate data on hate bias incidents in schools which, in turn, will allow all parties involved to craft better policies towards combating hate before it rises to the level of criminal activity.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give House Bill 14 a favorable report with the amendments described above.

hb0014t.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mizrahi

Position: FWA

HOUSE BILL 14

F1

(PRE-FILED)

6lr0720
CF 6lr0722

By: **Delegate Foley**

Requested: August 22, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 7, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation –**
3 **Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation
5 form to require the identification of certain information; requiring each county board
6 of education to report information about groups with certain characteristics under
7 certain circumstances; requiring each county board ~~of education~~ to post certain
8 information on its website in a certain manner on or before a certain date each year;
9 and generally relating to bullying, harassment, or intimidation and county boards of
10 education.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Education
13 Section 7–424
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Education**

19 7–424.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

2 (2) “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct,
3 including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication,
4 that:

5 (i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially
6 interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a
7 student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

8 1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal
9 characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation,
10 gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial
11 status, or physical or mental ability or disability;

12 2. Sexual in nature, including descriptions or depictions of a
13 student with the student’s intimate parts exposed or while engaged in an act of sexual
14 contact; or

15 3. Threatening or seriously intimidating; and

16 (ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or
17 on a school bus; or

18 2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

19 (3) “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by
20 means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

21 (4) “Intimate parts” means the naked genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or
22 female nipple.

23 (5) “Sexual contact” means sexual intercourse, including genital–genital,
24 oral–genital, anal–genital, or oral–anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite
25 sex.

26 (b) (1) The Department shall require a county board to report incidents of
27 bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students attending a public school under the
28 jurisdiction of the county board.

29 (2) An incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation may be reported
30 by:

31 (i) A student;

32 (ii) The parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student; or

1 (iii) A school staff member.

2 (c) (1) The Department shall create a standard victim of bullying, harassment,
3 or intimidation report form.

4 (2) Each victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form shall:

5 (i) Identify the victim and the alleged perpetrator, if known;

6 (ii) Indicate the age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;

7 (iii) Describe the incident, including alleged statements made by the
8 alleged perpetrator;

9 (IV) IF THE INCIDENT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED
10 IN WHOLE OR IN SUBSTANTIAL PART BY ANY OF THE ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED
11 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(I)1 OF THIS
12 SECTION, INDICATE THOSE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, IF KNOWN;

13 [(iv)] (V) Indicate the location of the incident;

14 [(v)] (VI) Identify any physical injury suffered by the victim and
15 describe the seriousness and any permanent effects of the injury;

16 [(vi)] (VII) Indicate the number of days a student is absent from
17 school, if any, as a result of the incident;

18 [(vii)] (VIII) Identify any request for psychological services initiated by
19 the victim or the victim's family due to psychological injuries suffered; and

20 [(viii)] (IX) Include instructions on how to fill out the form and the
21 mailing address to where the form shall be sent.

22 (3) A county board shall distribute copies of the victim of bullying,
23 harassment, or intimidation report form to each public school under the county board's
24 jurisdiction.

25 (d) (1) A county board may establish an anonymous two-way electronic tip
26 program to allow the reporting of an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation of a
27 student.

28 (2) The purpose of the anonymous two-way electronic tip program is for a
29 student, a parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student, or a school staff member to
30 report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

(3) Each county board that establishes an anonymous two-way electronic tip program shall publicize the anonymous two-way electronic tip program in student handbooks, school system websites, and other locations that the county board determines are necessary or appropriate.

(4) On receipt of a report of an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation from an anonymous two-way electronic tip, the recipient of the report or the recipient's designee shall:

(i) Complete a victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form in accordance with subsection (c) of this section; and

(ii) Provide a transcript of the conversation to a designated person in the school.

(5) The Governor may include funding in the State budget to provide grants to county boards to establish an anonymous two-way electronic tip program.

(e) (1) ~~Each~~ **SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBSECTION, EACH** county board shall submit summaries of report forms filed with the county board to the State Board on or before January 31 each year.

(2) A county board shall delete any information that identifies an individual.

(3) A COUNTY BOARD SHALL INCLUDE IN ITS REPORT INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION THAT, AFTER A THOROUGH AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION, ARE DETERMINED TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED IN WHOLE OR IN SUBSTANTIAL PART BY PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(I)1 OF THIS SECTION OF MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP, IF:

(I) THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP OVER THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR; OR

(II) THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENT RATE OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP.

(F) ~~ON (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 31 EACH YEAR, EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL POST IN A PROMINENT LOCATION ON ITS WEBSITE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION REPORTED TO THE STATE BOARD BY THE COUNTY BOARD UNDER SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION THAT WERE DETERMINED TO BE MOTIVATED BY AN ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP, DISAGGREGATED BY~~

1 ~~THE MOTIVATING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC~~ INFORMATION DESCRIBED UNDER
 2 SUBSECTION (E)(3) OF THIS SECTION.

3 (2) A COUNTY BOARD MAY NOT PUBLISH ANY INFORMATION THAT
 4 COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT.

5 [(f)] (G) The information contained in a victim of bullying, harassment, or
 6 intimidation report form in accordance with subsection (c) of this section or received from
 7 an anonymous two-way electronic tip in accordance with subsection (d) of this section:

8 (1) Is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as otherwise provided
 9 under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or this section; and

10 (2) May not be made a part of a student's permanent educational record.

11 [(g)] (H) (1) The Department shall submit a report on or before March 31 each
 12 year to the Senate Education, [Health, and Environmental Affairs] **ENERGY, AND THE**
 13 **ENVIRONMENT** Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, in accordance
 14 with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, consisting of a summary of the information
 15 included in the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report forms filed with the
 16 county boards the previous year.

17 (2) The report submitted by the Department shall include, to the extent
 18 feasible:

19 (i) A description of the act constituting the bullying, harassment, or
 20 intimidation;

21 (ii) The age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;

22 (iii) The allegation of the alleged perpetrator's motive;

23 (iv) A description of the investigation of the complaint and any
 24 corrective action taken by the appropriate school authorities;

25 (v) The number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a
 26 result of the incident; and

27 (vi) The number of false allegations reported.

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
 29 1, 2026.

House Bill 14 Favorable with Amendment One Pasaden

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FWA

Education, Energy, and the Environment
House Bill 14
Favorable with Amendment

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

We, the Steering Committee of One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community, request a favorable report with an amendment for House Bill 14.

Pasadena schools, especially in the Chesapeake cluster, have a history of bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents based on personal characteristics. We have especially seen this trend on the basis of students being LGBTQ+, Black, Brown, and Jewish. Some parents and community members even excuse and encourage this by insisting that it doesn't count as bullying BECAUSE of the specific personal characteristics that their children are attacking students on. We have heard from people who have left or are thinking of leaving Pasadena, and parents who have removed their children from the schools because of this issue and their fears for their children.

The amendment we would like to see is to get rid of "substantial increase." Not only is "substantial" not defined, but we would like to see ANY trends. Seeing the problem is the first step towards fixing the problem. We urge a favorable vote with amendment. Thank you.

Sincerely,
The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD

HB 14 - SUPPORT EEE Senate Committee Hearing 4.1.2

Uploaded by: Karen Finn

Position: FWA



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

HB14: County Boards of Education, Energy and the Environment - Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation-Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

**Education, Energy and Environment - April 1, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB 14 County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements with Senator Brooks' amendment which will delete the following in Section 1e(3) of the reprint (starting at line 23, on page 4 and ending with line 28): "IF: (I) THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN INCIDENTS 25 OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP 26 OVER THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR; OR 27 (II) THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENT RATE OF 28 BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP".

This deletion of this section will bring the bill closer to the original version that we were proud to support in the House Ways and Means Committee. The change will ensure that reporting is disaggregated and reported each year, not just when there is an increase in incidents.

By improving data collection and reporting on school bullying and harassment, this bill will improve the ability of school administration to understand and address bullying and harassment faced by students. While the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are already required to report on bullying and harassment, the current report combines reporting on all races and ethnicities, all religions, and all perceived sexual orientations in groupings that obscure the specific ways in which students may be targeted for their identities. HB 14 will enable the collection of better, more actionable data on the personal characteristics targeted by bullying and harassment.

The bill will amend the current process to disaggregate the data for the LEA and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) report on bullying, harassment and intimidation by specific races, ethnicities, religions and other designated classes. This additional information is vital to school administrators' ability to identify targeted groups and the ways in which individuals in those groups are targeted—and so to design district, school, and classroom strategies to address bullying and harassment. The bill will also require each district to share the data with its community via district website.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Improved reporting is especially important now; bullying and harassment continues to rise since the pandemic. In the most recent MSDE Report on Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation increased statewide by over 12%. Only five LEAs had decreased incidents, but others had very high increases, including Montgomery County, which saw a 40% increase in these incidents.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are key drivers of chronic absenteeism, which has increased significantly since 2020. When individuals are specifically targeted for their identities in school or by fellow students out of school, they are likely to disengage. In addition to school absence, bullying and harassment can contribute to mental health issues, specifically when the bullying is focused on characteristics that the youth cannot change. Other detrimental effects (according to a review of research published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry)¹ include lifelong impacts on physical health and socioeconomic status. The authors recommend that interventions need to clearly identify the underlying factors.

This bill is essential to the ability of schools to intervene in bullying and harassment. It will enable the collection, analysis and sharing of more and better data to better understand bullying, harassment and intimidation incidents in school. This data is critical to the ability of school administrators to understand and address bullying and harassment, improve school climate, and enable more children to feel safe in school.

We ask for your support for HB 14 with Senator Brooks' amendment and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Cynthia
Rubenstein
WDC President

Karen Finn
WDC Children and
Youth Subcommittee
Chair

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy
Chair

¹ Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, April 2018, Vol. 59, Issue 4, pg 405-421
<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12841>

HB 14 MCSS letter of support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Buckheit

Position: FWA

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

Bill:	House Bill 14	Date:	April 1, 2026
Title:	County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements	Committee:	Education, Energy, and the Environment
Position:	Favorable with amendments	Contact:	Kimberly Buckheit kimberly.buckheit1@maryland.gov 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.



HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Ha

Uploaded by: Lee Blinder

Position: FWA



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.



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

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.

HB14 ID Motivations Amendments (2) (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Martin Stein

Position: FWA



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony: HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD

Submitting: Laura Salganik, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE with Amendments

Hearing Date: April 1, 2026

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council is again submitting this testimony in favor of: HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation including the Amendment offered by Sen. Brooks. Consistent with Sen Brooks' amendment, we strongly recommend the removal of the two conditions which substantially limit the impact and effectiveness of the original Bill. These statements are found in Lines 24-28 of the proposed legislation and include the following language:

(I) THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN INCIDENTS
25 OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP
26 OVER THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR; OR
27 (II) THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENT RATE OF
28 BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP.

These statements dilute its impact and effectiveness considerably. Because there are no legal definitions of "substantial increase" or "disproportionate incident," these lines leave the bill subject to the interpretation of the County Boards, allowing them to choose not to participate and thus render the Bill ineffective at best.

We, therefore, respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB14 as amended by Sen. Brooks.

2026 HB0014 test supporting 033026 v2.pdf

Uploaded by: Melinda Littell

Position: FWA

Testimony on HB0014
County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information
Collection and Reporting Requirements
Favorable With Amendments

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, and esteemed members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to ask you to vote in favor of HB0014 with amendments. This bill would improve upon the existing reporting process in Maryland public schools relating to alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation occurring on school property, sponsored events, while traveling to or from school, or through electronic communication.

The harmful effects of bullying are well-documented. Students have a right to learn in a safe, productive, and inclusive environment that is free from bullying and intimidation. In furtherance of this goal, the Maryland legislature has already adopted anti-bullying laws requiring standardized reporting. Unfortunately, in many cases, the collection and reporting process lacks important information about the motivation behind the incidents, and each county school board decides what data to track. This information could provide insights to educators, parents, and policymakers interested in combatting bullying in our schools. One key data point that should be tracked is whether the incident was believed to have been motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic of the victim.

Specifically, the standardized report forms should include whether the incident was motivated by a person's race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. In turn, this categorized data should be included in the annual reports to the State Board of Education, and it should be made easily accessible to the public by website posting. HB0014 would add these requirements, and the data would be disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic.

The amendment language added by the House, however, would require this enhanced reporting only if "there has been a substantial increase in incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation for students in that group over the previous school year; or (ii) there is a disproportionate incident rate of bullying, harassment, or intimidation for students in that group." *See House Bill 14, p.4, lines 23-28.* These conditions should be removed so that the more comprehensive, disaggregated data is collected regardless of the number or rate of incidents so that trends can be identified with no arbitrary limitations.

We should not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation based on personal characteristics in any setting, least of all our public schools. Considering the current climate in which hate speech

and discrimination are on the rise, it is important to stand up for vulnerable persons, including members of the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, people all backgrounds and socioeconomic status. I believe these enhancements to the existing process for reporting and publicizing data on bullying in Maryland public schools would help inform parents, raise awareness about the reasons behind bullying, and document the prevalence of the problems in specific areas. Please help improve the process for combatting bullying by voting favorably with amendments on HB0014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Littell
Arnold, D33C

MD HB 14 - Revised Hate Bias Reporting Testimony C

Uploaded by: Tali Cohen

Position: FWA



**Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**HB14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation –
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

Testimony of Tali Cohen
ADL Washington, D.C. Regional Director
April 1, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee, my name is Tali Cohen, and I am the Regional Director of the ADL Washington, D.C. region. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding **HB14**, which would strengthen data collection regarding hate and bias incidents in Maryland’s K-12 schools.

Since its inception in 1913, ADL has had a timeless mission to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Dedicated to combatting antisemitism, prejudice, and bigotry of all kinds, ADL has long been at the forefront of efforts to deter and counter antisemitic incidents.

HB14 has the opportunity to do something simple but essential: it requires schools to identify and track the specific personal identity characteristics that motivate bullying and harassment incidents, and it requires transparency by making that data publicly available. ADL strongly believes that data drives policy; we cannot address what we do not measure.

We strongly supported the original House version of this bill and would like to express some concerns with the amended version before you. The amendments in section (e)(3), which grant county boards excessive discretion in reporting by allowing them to determine whether a particular group has experienced “a substantial increase in incidents” or “a disproportionate incident rate,” incredibly weaken the ultimate goal of protecting students from harassment. Because neither term is defined, we believe these provisions render the reporting requirement unenforceable.

However, with the introduction of amendments by Senator Brooks today, we continue to support HB14 **favorable with amendments**.



According to ADL's 2024 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, Maryland had the sixth-highest number of antisemitic incidents in the country—356 incidents across the state, with 107 of those occurring in K-12 schools. That's 107 times that Jewish students experienced harassment, vandalism or assault in their schools. And we know from research that many incidents go unreported, meaning the actual number is likely much higher.

These aren't just statistics. They represent students who are taunted with Holocaust jokes, who see swastikas drawn on their notebooks, and who are threatened simply because they are Jewish. Sadly, there are many stories I could share. One example right here at home in Maryland is from March 2024 where three 13-year-old students at Plum Point Middle School in Calvert County were charged with a hate crime after displaying swastikas, making Nazi salutes, and offensive comments to a classmate simply because of the classmate's religious beliefs. Hate and harassment like this can persist in our schools if it is not identified, tracked, and ultimately addressed.

HB14, with language closer to the original bill, will help schools and policymakers understand the scope and nature of bias-motivated bullying. When we track data by the motivating characteristic—whether that is religion, race, national origin or another protected category—we can identify patterns, allocate resources effectively and implement targeted interventions. This is how we move from awareness to action.

Additionally, when county boards post this data publicly, it creates accountability. Parents, educators and community members can see what is happening in their schools and work together to address it. Every student deserves to learn in an environment free from fear and harassment. By passing this bill, Maryland would be taking a critical step towards making that a reality.

Thank you for your time today. We urge the Committee to pass HB14 favorable with amendments.

HB0014_SWA_BullyingHarrassmentIntimidation_TSmith.

Uploaded by: Theresa Smith

Position: FWA

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
FROM: Theresa Smith, Special Education Advocate
DATE: March 30, 2026
BILL NO: HB0014 (County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements)



POSITION: Support with Amendments

Statement of Intent: I am providing informational testimony on HB0014 as a special education advocate. My intent is to ensure that legislative reporting requirements translate into tangible protections for all students. I seek to bridge the gap between data collection and meaningful intervention, particularly for students with disabilities who are often disproportionately impacted by behavioral policies. The system must move beyond just counting incidents to actively solving the root causes of bullying through qualified oversight and mandated action plans.

This bill seeks to alter the contents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation forms and requires county boards of education to report and post specific information regarding these incidents. While I support the increased transparency this bill provides, data collection is only as valuable as the actions it triggers. To ensure this legislation protects all children, I urge the committee to consider the following amendments.

1. Proposed Amendment: Action for Change Mandated Interventions

HB0014 requires county boards to report when there is a **substantial increase** or **disproportionate incident rate** of bullying for students in specific groups.

- **The Amendment:** Any report indicating a disproportionate rate or substantial increase in bullying must be accompanied by a **targeted intervention plan**.
- **The Goal:** Reporting must be a catalyst for systemic improvement—such as mandated school-wide culture shifts, specialized staff training, or community-based support programs—rather than a mere ledger of harm.

2. Proposed Amendment: Manifestation Determination & Qualified Oversight

The bill defines "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" as **intentional conduct**. For many students with disabilities, behavior is often a manifestation of their disability rather than a calculated "intent" to harm.

- **Manifestation Data Point:** For cases where the alleged perpetrator is a student with a disability, the reporting form must include a data point indicating whether the act was determined to be a **manifestation of their disability**.
- **Qualified Individual Requirement:** This determination must be confirmed by a **qualified professional** (such as a school psychologist along with a member of the student's Individualized Education Program/504 Plan team).
- **The Goal:** This ensures that we are not mischaracterizing disability-related behaviors while accurately identifying where additional behavioral supports are required.

By ensuring that new reporting requirements lead directly to action and by providing expert oversight for cases involving students with disabilities, we can transform HB0014 into a tool for true equity. I urge the committee to adopt these amendments to better serve all of Maryland's children.

Thank you,
Theresa Smith

2026 HB0014 Testimony Against 2026-04-01.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against HB0014

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable report on HB0014

I oppose

Altering the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation form to require, if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, **marital status**, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, the identification of those personal characteristics, if known.

I believe bullying is usually the result of feeling inferior by the perpetrator and that tormenting victims makes them feel superior. Victims are generally chosen moiré often because they are perceived to be weaker than the bully regardless of their physical characteristics.

This bill will just add to the non-educational workload of the school staff. In my experience, the bullies were equal opportunity perpetrators. Generally they were older and larger than we were. It did not matter if we were white, black, Hispanic or Asian. Often, those who were socially awkward, and/or were considered nerds or geeks were picked on regardless of race. Some of us would fit several of the characteristics to be recorded.

Once collected, what will be done with the data? Will staff be tasked to cross-reference the characteristics of the bully to the characteristics of the victims? Then, what will be done with the results of the analysis?

I believe the school system staff has more important things to do than to guess which characteristics of the victims possibly motivated the attacks. Gathering this data and posting it to a website will tend to further divide the students and parents in our current culture of identity politics. Acquiring this data will just be a waste of time and effort and possibly make things worse. Please enter an unfavorable report on HB0014.

Alan Lang
45 Marys Mount Road
Harwood, Maryland 20776
Legislative District 30B
410-336-9745
March 30, 2026

HB 0014_ County Boards of Education - Bullying, H

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

HB 0014: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I am writing as a concerned resident of Maryland to strongly oppose **HB 0014**.

This legislation shifts the focus from stopping all bullying and teaching basic respect to emphasizing identity politics and demographic categorization in school discipline and reporting. Expanding reporting requirements can divert time and resources away from direct intervention, counseling, and preventative programs that more effectively address bullying behavior. Schools should be empowered to focus on meaningful solutions rather than increased paperwork and compliance obligations.

My main concerns regarding this bill include:

- **Overemphasis on identity:** It pressures schools to view student conflicts through a lens of protected characteristics rather than addressing bad behavior uniformly, regardless of the motivation.
- **Increased bureaucracy and stigma:** Requiring detailed demographic tracking and public reporting adds administrative burden on already overstretched school staff and risks stigmatizing students based on group identity.
- **Privacy and division:** Publicly highlighting disaggregated data by race, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc., could exacerbate divisions among students and families rather than fostering unity.
- **Ineffective policy:** True bullying prevention comes from strong discipline policies, character education, parental involvement, and consistent enforcement — not more forms and identity checkboxes.

Maryland schools should focus on creating safe environments for all students by enforcing clear behavioral standards, not by collecting and publicizing more identity-based statistics. Our priority should be effective, viewpoint-neutral policies that protect every child without turning schools into data-collection arms for identity-based advocacy.

I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 0014** and vote against its passage in the Senate.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important student safety education legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals

MEC Statement - HB 14.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-CoChair

Position: INFO



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org

Email – md.education.coalition@gmail.com

April 1, 2026

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

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Informational - Request to amend

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) was originally founded over 40 years ago (1980) and is the oldest, most experienced, and diverse public education advocacy coalition in Maryland. MEC advocates for adequate operating/capital funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide for the nearly 900,000 students in Maryland's 1,350 plus public schools including charter schools, regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status.

MEC believes sections of the bill as written are somewhat vague, requiring more specific language to limit or prevent subjective interpretation that may not be applied as intend and offer the following amendment.

Page 3, Section (IV) **IF THE INCIDENT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED 5 IN WHOLE OR IN SUBSTANTIAL PART BY ANY OF THE ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED 6 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(I)1 OF THIS 7 SECTION, INDICATE THOSE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, IF KNOWN;**

- Please add the following definition for “Characteristics” based on official Maryland State Department of Education definitions for discrimination
 - o Characteristics defined “age, ancestry, color, creed, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, national origin, race, religious affiliation, belief or opinion, sex, or sexual orientation in matter.”
- SOURCE: Excerpt from MSDE [Non-Discrimination Statement](#)

MEC is concerned that without a definition of characteristics, decision-makers may interpret the policies differently, not with the intent of this bill.

Therefore, we urge the addition of the amendment above or language which more clearly defines the intent.

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BC - Information_ X HB14.pdf

Uploaded by: Riya Gupta

Position: INFO



INFORMATIONAL: House Bill 14

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

April 1, 2026

The Blueprint Coalition is a coalition of more than 30 organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and is co-led by Strong Schools Maryland and the Maryland Education Coalition. The coalition is dedicated to the full implementation and funding of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and works to ensure that Maryland's public education system meets the needs of all students, particularly those most impacted by systemic inequities. Grounded in our shared values, the Blueprint Coalition believes that data, reporting transparency, and public accessibility are essential to ensuring the Blueprint can address structural inequities, including racism and discrimination. **Strong Schools Maryland offers informational testimony for HB 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

House Bill 14 takes a step toward greater transparency and accountability by strengthening how bullying and harassment data are collected and publicly reported. The bill proposes adding a component to the Bullying Report Form to indicate whether an incident is believed to have been motivated by actual or perceived characteristics of the impacted student. It also requires county boards to publish this data in a disaggregated format. These changes are intended to surface patterns of harm that are often hidden in aggregate reporting

Safe school environments are foundational to educational equity. When students experience bullying or harassment related to race, disability, gender identity, immigration status, or socioeconomic background, it undermines their sense of safety, belonging, and ability to engage academically. HB 14 aligns with the goals of the Blueprint by aiming to better understand and address these harms. We cannot effectively respond to inequities if we do not understand who is being impacted.

While we support the intent of the bill, we urge the Committee to carefully consider possible unintended consequences of implementing such a policy. Key considerations include the following:

- Accurately identifying motivating personal characteristics requires clear standards and cultural competency. HB 14 does not specify who is responsible for determining whether an incident was motivated by a particular characteristic or when that determination should occur within the investigative process. Without this clarity, implementation may vary across districts, resulting in inconsistent and potentially unreliable data.
- Determining motivation is complex and often subjective. Without adequate training and guidance, requiring school-level staff to make and document these determinations may lead to inconsistent or inaccurate reporting, particularly in communities where trust between families and school systems is fragile.
- Disaggregated reporting may create privacy risks. In smaller schools or districts, small data sets increase the likelihood of indirect identification of individual students, even when personally identifiable information is removed.
- Protecting privacy should not limit schools' ability to respond to harm. Schools and districts should still be encouraged to collect detailed internal data to identify patterns, partner with impacted communities, and direct resources and interventions where they are most needed.

With thoughtful implementation, clear guidance, and appropriate safeguards, HB 14 can serve as a meaningful tool to improve transparency, accountability, and student well-being.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.