
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 781 - Public Middle Schools – Instruction on the Consequences of a Conviction for Felony Murder

DATE: February 25, 2026

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **HB 781**, which would require MSDE to create age-appropriate instructional resources for public middle school students on the legal and personal consequences of a conviction for felony murder. Beginning in the 2027–2028 school year, Maryland’s local education agencies (LEAs) would be required to incorporate this instruction at least once during middle school to ensure students understand the loss of freedom, rights, and access to programs resulting from such convictions.

The State Board and MSDE believe that the legislative requirement would be duplicative of current regulatory requirements and would run counter to the process entrusted to the State Board, MSDE, and LEAs.

The State Board and MSDE established a structured and collaborative process for reviewing, revising, and adopting standards, frameworks, and curricular resources on January 23, 2024. Both entities are committed to ensuring that the development of standards, frameworks, and curricular resources is conducted through this process, which includes collaboration between the State Board, MSDE, educators, parents, content experts, and community leaders from across the State through the convening of a Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee (SFVC). This process ensures that all curriculum updates are age-appropriate, evidence-based, and delivered in a best-in-class way.

Consequently, the social studies standards and frameworks were revised through the SFVC process and adopted by the State Board on June 24, 2025, and August 26, 2025. HB 781 would unnecessarily disrupt ongoing work to support the implementation of the revised standards, delaying timely updates.

The State Board and MSDE respectfully request that the Committee consider this information as it deliberates **HB 781**. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.