
INFORMATIONAL
House Bill 781
Public Middle Schools – Instruction on the Consequences of a Conviction for Felony Murder

House Ways & Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on HB 781, which would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum resources and county boards of education to develop and incorporate instruction on the consequences of a conviction for felony murder for public middle school students in the State.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports policies and programs that will give our students access to the resources and knowledge they need to achieve their full potential, and we recognize the importance of students' awareness of the potential impact of high-risk behaviors. Simultaneously, we have longstanding concerns about legislatively mandating curriculum. With finite instructional time in the school year, adding content without a comprehensive review of existing standards risks reducing the time available for each topic. We believe that it is the purview of the MSDE and the State Board of Education to develop and implement curriculum standards to meet the academic needs of the students served in Maryland's public schools. It is then the responsibility of local districts to determine how best to implement a program of study that best serves the needs of their students.

While we appreciate the intent of this legislation, we believe that the State Board and local boards are best suited to determine how to approach instruction on this issue.