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**TO:** House Ways and Means Committee  
**BILL:** House Bill (HB) 1202 - Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies – Culture and History of Palestine  
**DATE:** March 10, 2026  
**POSITION:** Letter of Opposition

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and State Board of Education (State Board) respectfully oppose **HB 1202**, which would mandate new social studies standards on Palestinian culture and history, require MSDE to develop a model curriculum, instructional resources, and optional professional development, and amend bullying policies to directly address anti-Palestinian bias.

The State Board and MSDE do not oppose this legislation on the merits of the curricular content, but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would run counter to the process entrusted to the State Board, MSDE, and Maryland's LEAs. Mandating specific content curriculum without going through the established State Board standards and frameworks review process upends the State Board's role in partnership with educators, school systems, and subject matter experts.

MSDE and the State Board strongly support inclusive, accurate, research-based, and developmentally appropriate history instruction. As such, the existing social studies state framework provides evidence-based opportunities for students to explore regional histories – including Palestinian history and identity – within a structured, academically grounded context aligned to college and career ready expectations. More specifically, the social studies framework includes a study of the Middle East across grades 6–12 in world history and global studies courses. Objectives include:

- Examining how regional conflicts (e.g., the Israeli-Egyptian conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, etc.) and diplomacy have influenced efforts toward stability and cooperation in the Middle East (6/7.7.4.c).
- Analyzing how energy dependence, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Iranian Revolution impacted United States foreign policy (USH.4.3.c).

The Department remains committed to ensuring that students have access to inclusive, accurate, and developmentally appropriate instruction on Palestinian history and identity, delivered through the established standards and frameworks to maintain academic rigor and integrity.

The State Board and MSDE respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 1202**. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov).