
Statement of Support for MD HB 1043
March 2nd, 2026

Dear Maryland Ways & Means Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition for Responsible Home Education, a homeschool alumni founded and powered organization that works across research, programming and advocacy to support safe, responsible homeschooling. We are a national organization, and are proud of the 300+ Maryland alumni who are part of our work in staff, board and volunteer capacities. **Informed especially by our lived experience as homeschool alumni, we are in support of HB 1043- providing homeschooled students in Maryland the Right to Play.**

As an organization that believes in children's rights, we believe their "right to play" is a critical component of their childhoods in Maryland, and applaud the legislature for considering homeschooled children. Youth participation in extracurricular activities, including sports, is nearly universally agreed upon as an important developmental opportunity promoting positive outcomes¹. Community organizations are a broad resource for younger constituents, but teens are often limited to school-based opportunities. For homeschooled students, who are de facto not part of a structured school community, there can be an opportunity gap as they seek benefits of extracurriculars accessible to their peers. This includes improved social connections, positive self image, and increased social-emotional health², and are also strongly considered in college applications³.

¹ Verner-Filion, J., Holding, A., Gingras, I., Koestner, R. (2025). Extracurricular Activities—Extra Beneficial: The Role of Motivation for Extracurricular Activities on Outcomes in High-School Students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 97(7), pp. 1869-1881. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.70008>

² Massoni, Erin (2011) "Positive Effects of Extra Curricular Activities on Students," ESSAI: Vol. 9, Article 27. <https://dc.cod.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1370&context=essai>

³ Durrani, A. (2025, August 20). *How colleges weigh high school extracurriculars*. usnews.com. <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/articles/how-colleges-weigh-high-school-extracurriculars>

The Coalition for Responsible Education recommends that Maryland legislators seize the opportunity to increase access to extracurriculars for homeschooled students, for two reasons. First, the undeniable positive outcomes of youth participation in extracurriculars should extend to children in all educational modalities⁴. Second, homeschooled students that participate in extracurricular activities will have increased access to additional safe adults, taking a step towards measures consistent with current child safety recommendations⁵.

Here's what one of our Maryland alumni had to say -

I support MD HB 1043 because it would allow eligible homeschool students to participate in interscholastic athletics, thereby increasing these often-isolated students' visibility to mandated reporters. It would also provide homeschooled students with the physical, social, and emotional benefits associated with team sports, which are often not feasible to recreate in a homeschooling environment.

We know that adding homeschooled children to a team roster will ask more of school districts, and acknowledge that there will be challenges as these communities learn to work together. The benefits for these students will outweigh the disadvantages, and CRHE urges legislators to continue prioritizing all children's right to play in Maryland.

Please support HB 1043.



Tess Ulrey

Executive Director, Coalition for Responsible Home Education
www.crhe.org - t.ulrey@responsiblehomeschooling.org

⁴ Verner-Filion et al, *supra* note 1

⁵ *Safe adults*. Monique Burr Foundation. (2022, February 28).
<https://mbfpreventioneducation.org/safe-adults/>