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BILL: House Bill 73
TITLE: Public Schools – Water Safety and Swimming Course –
Established
HEARING DATE: February 25, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all 24 local boards of education in Maryland, respectfully **opposes HB 73 Public Schools – Water Safety and Swimming Course – Established.**

This bill requires, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, that each county board implements a course on water safety and swimming based on curriculum content standards developed by the State Board in each public school for students in kindergarten through 8th grade. Public schools may partner with local parks and recreation agencies to provide access to water and swimming facilities. The bill requires that each county board ensure reasonable accommodations necessary to provide students with disabilities equal opportunity to participate to the fullest extent possible. The bill also provides that the State Board may adopt implementing regulations.

Although MABE appreciates the intent of HB 73 to improve water safety for students, MABE firmly believes that decisions regarding curriculum, and whether to have water safety and swimming courses, are best left to the local school boards who are most responsive to the communities they serve. Moreover, the bill provides no funding source to pay for transportation to and from the recreational swimming facilities, certified swimming instructors, or other equipment and supplies that may be needed to properly implement the courses.

For these reasons, **MABE opposes HB 73 and kindly requests an unfavorable report.**