

BILL: House Bill 781
TITLE: Public Middle Schools – Instruction on the Consequences of a Conviction for Felony Murder
HEARING DATE: February 25, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Ways & Means / Judiciary
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state’s local boards of education, **opposes House Bill 781**. MABE’s opposition to this bill is firmly grounded in the association’s resolutions, which affirm that MABE:

- Supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, grading policies, and instructional programs and the adoption of statewide laws and regulations reflecting a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement; and
- Opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum or otherwise usurp local board authority over public school curriculum or student assessments.

Thus, MABE opposes House Bill 781, which requires each local board of education to develop and implement a curriculum about the consequences of a conviction for felony murder for middle school students.

MABE understands and appreciates the value of civic, historical, and ethical lessons for public school students, including middle school students. However, curricular requirements for a middle school felony murder course — a controversial doctrine within Maryland law where individuals can be charged with murder even if they did not directly kill someone — should not be mandated. Maryland’s local school boards already have established social studies and civics curricula. Beyond the issue of local control, a mandated course on felony murder risks contributing to misinformation, unnecessary fear, and emotional distress, particularly for middle school students from communities affected by crime and the justice system.

In Maryland, the authority to adopt curriculum, courses of study, and the selection of textbooks resides with each local board of education and superintendent.

For the above reasons, **MABE respectfully requests an unfavorable report for House Bill 781.**