

Good afternoon Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Brittain. I am a Maryland parent, a homeschool mother of three, and a small business owner operating a state-regulated Family Child Care and Aspire Quality Pre-K program. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. I am here in strong support of the *Homeschool Students in Maryland – Right to Play* bill.

Education in Maryland looks different for every family. Some attend public school, some private school, and some homeschool. We chose to homeschool after our daughter's needs were not being met in our local public school. Even with an IEP in place, she was falling behind in reading. We are blessed to have the ability to make this choice, but we made it after experiencing a system overwhelmed by enrollment and limited resources, in our case there was not enough staff to provide the additional supports outlined in IEP.

My local elementary school, Chesapeake Terrace, is operating at 117% capacity. My local high school, Sparrows Point, is at 130% capacity. As a state-regulated childcare provider, if my Pre-K program operated at 117% capacity, I would be shut down immediately. We are not allowed to exceed our approved enrollment for safety and quality reasons. Why are we not holding county public schools to the same standards?

When schools are operating far beyond capacity, it becomes increasingly difficult to effectively serve every student. That reality is one reason more families are homeschooling their kids.

Homeschooling has allowed our daughter to catch up and thrive academically. However, although we continue to be reviewed by Baltimore County Public Schools and pay the same taxes that fund public education, we are denied access to many of the community benefits, including after-school sports.

Homeschool families are part of these same communities. Our children live in these districts. We contribute to the same tax base that funds public schools and athletic programs. They deserve a reasonable pathway to participate in sports at their local public high schools.

Athletics are more than games. They build teamwork, resilience, leadership, discipline, and support mental health. Participation in school athletics can also open doors to college recruitment opportunities, athletic scholarships, and stronger college applications. Homeschool students should not be excluded from those pathways simply because their primary education takes place at home. Participating in recreational sports does not offer the same benefits as high school sports.

This bill does not take opportunities away from public school students. It simply provides a fair and structured pathway for homeschool students to participate.

Homeschooling is an educational choice often made in response to the realities of an overwhelmed school system. It should not be a barrier to opportunity.

I would like to add an amendment that would include access to all after school clubs, this gives students diversity in their college applications and allows them to fully engage in the community.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Megan Brittain