

Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 14
Favorable Report with Amendment

Honorable Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee;

We, the Steering Committee of One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community, request a favorable report for House Bill 14 and your consideration of an amendment.

Pasadena schools, especially in the Chesapeake cluster, have a history of bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents based on personal characteristics. We have especially seen this trend on the basis of students being LGBTQ+, Black, Brown, and Jewish. Some parents and community members even excuse and encourage this by insisting that it doesn't count as bullying BECAUSE of the specific personal characteristics that their children are attacking students on. We have heard from people who have left or are thinking of leaving Pasadena, and parents who have removed their children from the schools because of this issue and their fears for their children.

We would appreciate it if you would consider an amendment to this bill to show the number of incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation based on personal characteristics (in general) in each school, at least when those numbers are above a certain percentage of the school population as a whole (as determined by you.) This could help school administrators see the full picture and make efforts to remedy the situation in a manner that would be most effective given the culture of the school and community. It could also help parents decide whether that school district is the safest for their children. The Maryland General Assembly has previously voted in manners that indicate an understanding that attacks based on certain personal characteristics are in their own category, recognizing hate bias incidents and hate crimes as separate from other types of attacks.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD