

INFORMATIONAL
House Bill 1202
Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies – Culture
and History of Palestine

House Ways & Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on HB 1202, which would require the State Board of Education to develop content standards regarding the culture and history of Palestine to be included in State standards for social studies. It would also require the Department (MSDE) to develop curriculum guides and instructional resources regarding the culture and history of Palestine and require public schools to include Palestinian culture and history in the social studies curriculum.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

We appreciate the sponsor's focus on addressing incidences of bullying, and we affirm that any form of harassment based on a child's national origin, race, religion, ethnicity, or other aspect of identity has no place in our schools. MSEA has longstanding concerns about legislatively mandating curriculum. This is not a reflection on the merit of the subject matter, but rather the importance of preserving the process for establishing standards and curriculum that balances cohesive statewide objectives and the role of educators as professionals in the decision-making process related to curriculum and instruction. With finite instructional time in the school year, adding content without a comprehensive review of existing standards reduces the time available for each topic. The boards and educators responsible for this process must consider standards and curriculum

holistically to ensure that the scope and sequence of content is aligned and integrated in a manner that supports students' development of core skills.

MSEA recognizes the importance of inclusive social studies curriculum that helps students better understand the lives, cultures, and experiences of different people, and we have supported efforts to ensure regular, comprehensive reviews of content standards that include stakeholder input. It is then the purview of MSDE and the State Board of Education to develop curriculum standards to meet the needs of the students served in Maryland's public schools. Local boards of education and educators are responsible for determining how to implement a program of study that serves the needs of their students, and we believe these entities are best situated to determine how to address specific curricular issues in their local context.