

HB14 - County Boards of Ed - Bullying, Harassment,

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FAV



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- Jewish Labor Committee
- Jewish War Veterans
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- National Council of Jewish Women
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- Rabbinical Council of America
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- Shomrei Emenah Congregation
- Suburban Orthodox Congregation
- Temple Beth Shalom
- Temple Isaiah
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Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation -
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements
House Ways & Means Committee | January 29, 2026
SUPPORT**

Background: House Bill 14 would alter the contents of the classroom bullying, harassment, or intimidation reporting form to require a reporting mechanism if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. The bill also mandates transparency, by requiring county boards of education to annually post disaggregated data on reported incidents and motivations on their websites.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, as well as the organized Jewish Community of Baltimore.

Every child deserves to learn without fear of harassment or intimidation. This bill improves how schools collect and understand data on bullying so that educators and policymakers can identify patterns, target interventions, and cultivate safer, more inclusive learning environments.

Every school is different. We cannot assume that the biases prominent in one school system are the same in another. Enhanced reporting of incidents motivated by personal characteristics (including religion, race, and disability) aligns with longstanding civil rights principles. Knowing the scope and nature of bias-motivated harassment is essential to effectively countering it and supporting affected students. By requiring this reporting, schools can handle their respective prominent biases on a case-by-case basis.

HB14 reflects Maryland's commitment to affirming the dignity and safety of all students. It equips educators, families, and policymakers with better tools to identify and address harmful behavior, especially when rooted in bias or prejudice.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB14.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

Letter of Support HB014 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Alita-Geri Carter

Position: FAV



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

January 27, 2026

BILL: HB 14 – County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
POSITION: Support

RE: Statement of Support

Dear Chairwoman Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, Delegate Foley and Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 14**. This legislation addresses a critical need for data-driven transparency regarding the safety and well-being of students in Maryland's public schools.

As someone deeply invested in the rights and safety of students, highlighting those who are most vulnerable, those with disabilities. Data tells a story and this type of data will support awareness of areas of improvement concerning inclusion and belonging. HB 14 strengthens our state's response to these incidents in two vital ways:

1. **Mandatory Identification of Bias:** By requiring that report forms specifically indicate whether an incident was motivated by actual or perceived personal characteristics, such as physical or mental disability, the bill ensures that we are tracking targeted harassment rather than just general conflict.
2. **Public Accountability:** The requirement for county boards to post disaggregated data on their websites ensures that parents, advocates, and lawmakers can see exactly which groups of students are being targeted. This public reporting is essential for holding local school systems accountable for their school climates.

This bill does not just collect more data; it collects the *right* data to allow for targeted interventions and systemic improvements. It is an essential step toward ensuring every child, regardless of their personal characteristics, can learn in an environment free from intimidation.

I respectfully urge a Favorable report on HB 14.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, CPNP-PC, BCPA
Resident, Howard County, MD

HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Ha

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

Thursday January 29, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

House Bill #14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation -
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Because Trans Maryland believes in protecting the rights of all Marylanders, particularly transgender community members, to have access to a quality education free of bullying or harassment, whether it be on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national origin, native language, disability, or religion, we write in support of House Bill 14.

Maryland law requires County Boards of Education to report to the State Board of Education incidents of bullying and harassment motivated by perceived personal characteristics such as race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability. However, under current law, County Boards are not required to track or report the perceived personal characteristic for which the student was targeted. This creates a ridiculous scenario where schools are required to collect and report extensive information about bullying and harassment except for the reason the bullying occurred in the first place.

House Bill 14 would remedy this problem, requiring County Boards to collect and report this data to the State Board of Education. In addition, it would also require County Boards to publish by January 31 of each year an annual report on the total number of incidents of bullying and harassment on the basis of perceived personal characteristics, broken down into the motivating personal characteristics.



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

This information is absolutely critical to ensuring a safe learning environment for all Maryland students. It will not only help County Boards identify the communities most at risk of bullying and harassment, it will also help the State Board of Education, Maryland Department of Education, and other agencies to track whether anti-bullying interventions are having a positive or negative effect.

Beyond its use to the state, publication of this information can also be incredibly empowering to students who were themselves victims of bullying and harassment. It demonstrates to them that if they tell their stories, they will be counted and that County Boards can be held accountable for their actions or inactions in response. It can also help students to know that they are not alone, that others face and have faced the same harassment, and that perhaps by standing up together they can fight back against a status quo that treats them as others.

While Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 14, a proposed amendment would potentially require further disaggregation of data to report incidents at the school, rather than the county, level. Trans Maryland would be in strong support of this proposed amendment if it could be drafted so as to address concerns about particular students being identifiable where there are too few reports on a particular perceived personal characteristic.

BTU Testimony HB14 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

**House Bill 14 – County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation -
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements
Ways and Means Committee
January 29, 2026**

FAVORABLE

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents over 9,000 employees of Baltimore City Public Schools, including teachers, paraprofessionals, school secretaries, counselors, librarians, clinicians, transportation aides, and school support staff. Our members are on the frontlines of public education everyday, and strive to ensure a safe learning environment for the students we serve. As we educate, support and develop Baltimore City’s young people, we encounter some of the most challenging work environments in the state, and student bullying is a major concern of our members that affects educator effectiveness, retention, and student success, as our working conditions are students’ learning conditions. The Baltimore Teachers Union is writing in strong **support** of HB 14 and **we request that the committee issue a favorable report.**

Educators are increasingly concerned about the rise in bullying, harassment, and intimidation in our schools, especially incidents motivated by race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, and other personal identifying characteristics. Yet without consistent, comprehensive data collection and public reporting, these incidents remain undercounted, misunderstood, and too often unaddressed. This bill takes a critical step toward accountability by requiring schools and districts to collect and report meaningful data on bullying and bias incidents, allowing policymakers, educators, and communities to identify trends, target interventions, and ensure that students who are most vulnerable are protected.

A safe learning environment is not optional—it is foundational to student success. Students cannot learn when they feel threatened, targeted, or invisible. Schools have a responsibility to provide not only academic instruction, but also environments where every child is respected, affirmed, and able to participate fully in school life. Transparency around bullying and bias incidents strengthens trust between families and schools, supports early intervention, and helps ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed.

The Baltimore Teachers Union believes that public education must serve all students, without exception. Strong reporting requirements are not about punishment—they are about prevention, protection, and progress. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on this bill and thank you for your leadership in advancing student safety and equity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MD_HB0014_2026_HoCoJAG.pdf

Uploaded by: David Albert

Position: FAV



HoCo JAG

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

January 27th, 2026

Testimony in support of House Bill 14 - 2026

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Dear Chairperson Wilkins and Vice-Chair Feldmark,

HB0014 is essential to helping Maryland schools become the safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment we seek for all students. On behalf of the Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group (HoCoJAG), I am writing to respectfully request a favorable report from your committee.

In 2024 and in 2025, Jewish citizens of Howard County were more likely to experience hate and bias incidents than any other group (per HCPD data). FBI hate crime statistics also show that Jews are the group most likely to experience hate bias crimes in Maryland and that Maryland is the fifth worst state in the nation in this regard.

The US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, under the Biden administration, investigated the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and issued a report (see link below) identifying a wide range of concerns, stating in their summary that:

“Specifically, OCR is concerned that the evidence produced to date suggests that a hostile environment likely existed for Jewish students in the School System but because – as the School System acknowledged in the course of this investigation – the School System did not assess whether any incidents reported to it during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year created or contributed to a hostile environment based on shared Jewish ancestry, the School System likely did not take steps necessary to redress any such hostile environment.”

The failure to recognize and track incidents of antisemitic bullying, harassment, and intimidation has resulted in a hostile environment for Jewish students in many schools and school systems across Maryland. Ensuring that schools recognize, track, and report incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, against Jews as against any group, is essential to compliance with Title VI. HB0014 will help ensure that Maryland school systems comply with civil rights law and that Jewish students as well as students of all backgrounds, have equal access to education free of a hostile environment.

We thank Delegate Foley for sponsoring HB0014 and respectfully request a favorable report from the committee.

Sincerely,

David Albert
Vice President of the Board of Directors
Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

ref: <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-letters-and-agreements/03241154-a.pdf>

EzraTowne_HB0014_Favorable_2026_0127 (W&M).pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

Testimony Favorable to HB0014: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

January 27, 2026

Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair, Delegate Jessica Feldmark, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. I am writing to you today to ask you to vote favorably on HB0014.

HB0014 standardizes and improves the bullying, harassment, and intimidation forms that school boards of education compile and report on to add the concrete reasons for the bullying, harassment, and intimidation to include: race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability.

Many school districts within Maryland already compile this information, but not all of them do. In fact some of the district school boards lump all bullying, harassment, and intimidation into a single category - leaving no accountability for school districts to address the most prevalent forms of such incidents.

I am a transgender person, with two children in Montgomery County Public Schools. If my children were bullied, harassed or intimidated because their parent is transgender, I would want the form that the school board assembles to indicate that. Luckily, I live in a county that does just that.

In addition, because the school district compiles their data including the reasons for bullying, etc. I can make an educated guess about whether or not my children would be safe attending school in a particular district. And in Montgomery County, I can even see data on each individual school because it is released each year as part of their School Climate Surveys.

I want all school districts in Maryland to be this accountable to parents and students. **It is for this reason that I ask for a favorable vote on HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

Sincerely,
Ezra MacLeod Towne
Wheaton, D18

1-29 HB 14-Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation_LWVM

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 14 - County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Position: Favorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: January 29, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that supports policies that provide an equitable, quality education for all children. LWVMD supports *HB 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*, which amends current law to promote greater data transparency and accessibility around incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

Bullying behaviors are a troubling and widespread issue that negatively affects children and adolescents. A meta-analysis found that 35% of adolescents were involved in bullying, either as bullies, victims, or as both bullies and victims.¹ Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) collects data on bullying, but it is one of ten behaviors reported as attacks/threats/fighting, and only then if a student is suspended or expelled.² Thus, Maryland families and educators lack a good understanding of how wide-spread these behaviors are, something this bill addresses.

Bullying negatively impacts children’s mental health (anxiety, depression, low-self-esteem, suicidal thoughts), physical health (headaches, sleep/eating disorders), academic performance (poor grades, dropout risk, avoiding school), and social skills (isolation, relationships). These negative impacts have long-term impacts, extending into adulthood.

Because of the short and long-term negative impact of bullying on the educational experiences of students, data should be transparent, reasonably detailed and accessible to educators, parents, and the public. This will help both families and educators better address the issue. By ensuring that bullying, harassment, and intimidation data is accessible and transparent, ***House Bill 14 encourages accountability for bullying behaviors and will facilitate dialogue about how to address these issues.***

LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB14.

¹Modecki, K. L., et al. (2014). Bullying prevalence across contexts: A meta-analysis measuring cyber and traditional bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 55* (5). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.06.007>

² Maryland State Department of Education. (October 2025). *Suspensions by school and major offense category: In-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.* <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/documents/dcaa/ssp/20242025student/2025-student-suspensions-by-school-combined-a.pdf>

HB14 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Graham Snyder

Position: FAV



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office Children
45 Calvert Street,
Annapolis, MD 21401

Graham Snyder, *Chair*
Joyce Yun, *Vice-Chair*
Lucia Zaklin, *Secretary*

Re: HB 14 | County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Dear Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins and the Ways and Means Committee:

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness, and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing young people.

HB 14 mandates counties to record the motivation of bullying incidents in Maryland public schools if it is partially or wholly connected to the actual or perceived characteristics of the victim. Moreover, the legislation mandates that the number of identity-related bullying incidents be accessibly reported on the county's website. This legislation is a meaningful step towards reducing bullying and increasing educational transparency in our state.

It is important to note that nearly 20% of students in the United States have reported experiencing bullying, and over half of those who have experienced bullying report feeling as though their bully "had the ability to influence what other students think of them"¹. Moreover, the Center for Injury Prevention and Control has found that bullying behavior and suicide-related behavior in a student are closely related.² Bullying is a significant subject which must be continuously reviewed and addressed.

First, the recording of motivation for bullying incidents will increase school and county awareness of motivation behind bullying. Classroom, school, and county-level interventions must be informed and purposeful. By utilizing data that will be collected by this bill, it will inform educators, administrators, and staff of how to best reduce identity-based bullying incidents in schools.

Beyond the internal informational benefit, the public display of statistics is meaningful from a transparency perspective. Guardians and students should have as much information as possible about the institutions which they may attend. Wellness in schools is indicative of overall community flourishing, and capturing the extent of identity-related bullying incidents will provide insight into the wellbeing of

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services, "Facts about Bullying," StopBullying.gov, October 9, 2024, <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/facts#bullying-research>.

² National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S.). Division of Violence Prevention., "The Relationship between Bullying and Suicide : What We Know Ad What It Means for Schools," *Cdc.gov* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.), 2014), <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/34163>.

schools, communities, and counties which contain them. By requiring that data collected be publicly displayed and available, prospective and current families, as well as administrators, will have more information to evaluate the success of schools.

Finally, this bill further incentivizes reducing bullying in Maryland public schools. The collection of new information on bullying and the insight it may provide will drive schools and counties to more deliberately reduce bullying occurrences and severity. As future anti-bullying interventions are implemented, it is imperative that we utilize new data gathered with this bill to focus on inclusion and community building in schools. In this, HB 14 advances student wellbeing, educational and personal outcomes, and school success.

The Council has voted in favor of endorsing HB 14, as it aligns with the Council's Legislative Platform supporting:

- Training for educators and school staff, among other measures that improve instruction and quality of life for students
- Policies and programs intended to prevent bullying, harassment or violence;

For these reasons, the Maryland Youth Advisory Council respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 14. We thank you for considering this essential legislation and for your commitment to improving the lives of youth and all residents across Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Snyder', with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Graham Snyder
Chair, Maryland Youth Advisory Council

2026-1-29 HB14 (FAV).pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Frederick

Position: FAV

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
EQUITY, POLICY & ENGAGEMENT

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staffs

JENNIFER FREDERICK
Assistant Attorney General

January 29, 2026

TO: The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Jennifer Frederick, Assistant Attorney General
Counsel, Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention
Executive Division, Maryland Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or
Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements -
Favorable

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports House Bill 14, County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements, sponsored by Delegate Foley. HB14 proposes to adjust the reporting process of bullying in schools to recognize when an incident is motivated by hate and ensure that data about those incidents is easily accessible online.

As Maryland's elected Chief Legal Officer, the Attorney General supervises and directs the legal business of the State. The OAG advises and represents State institutions, agencies, boards, commissions, and officials, while representing Maryland's interests in state and federal litigation. The OAG uses its authority to enforce the rule of law, protect Marylanders, and promote the public good.

This legislation directly supports our efforts to improve reporting of any act of hate, especially non-criminal hate, also known as hate bias incidents. With clearer data on acts of hate, all of Maryland will have a better understanding of what an act of hate looks like in our schools. Additionally, the OAG and the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention will be able to assess better mechanisms to address and prevent hate in schools. By working to address hate in childhood before it reaches a criminal level, Maryland will be able to create

better policies and practices for a better tomorrow. This data is necessary to make informed decisions towards that goal.

Additionally, HB 14 will create a way to share how prevalent hate bias incidents are in schools without involving law enforcement. Currently, the only official mechanism for monitoring hate across the state is to report it to law enforcement. By creating a pathway for schools to share data on hate bias incidents, education professionals will be able to use mechanisms already available to them without creating an additional requirement to report all hate bias incidents. Instead, this builds on the existing bullying report the Maryland Department of Education releases every year and does not create an additional burden on teachers while also providing local communities and the whole state a better understanding of what our students are experiencing within the classroom.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give House Bill 14 a favorable report.

Jewish Federation of Annapolis and the Chesapeake

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mizrahi

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony of the Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake
House Ways and Means Committee – January 29, 2026
In Support of HB 14 — County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or
Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 14. The Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake stands with students and families in promoting safe, respectful learning environments for all children, regardless of religion, race, disability, or other characteristics.

Why this bill matters

Accurate reporting on bullying, harassment, and bias-motivated incidents is essential for prevention, intervention, and trust. Maryland has seen a troubling rise in antisemitic incidents, including in schools. According to the 2024 ADL Audit, antisemitic incidents in Maryland increased 5% from 2023, with K-12 schools among the epicenters.

Local data from the 2024–25 school year underscores the urgency: total bullying incidents fell from 1,557 to 1,182, yet bias-motivated incidents — including antisemitism — still affected **229 students**, and high schools saw a slight increase in bias-related reports. These numbers represent real students facing harassment that disrupts learning and undermines safety.

HB 14’s requirement to disaggregate bullying reports by motivating characteristic — including religion and disability — will allow schools and communities to:

- Respond quickly to bias before it escalates;
- Provide culturally competent support to affected students;
- Train staff to recognize and address all forms of bias;
- Build trust with families through transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

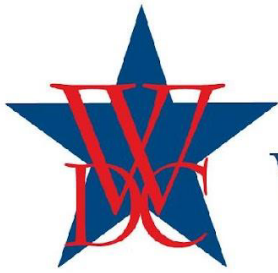
HB 14 will strengthen school accountability, protect student dignity, and ensure every child can learn free from fear and harassment. The Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake respectfully urges a favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake

HB 14 - SUPPORT - WDC Jan 2026 FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Finn

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**House Bill HB 14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation-
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

**Ways and Means Committee - January 29, 2026
SUPPORT**

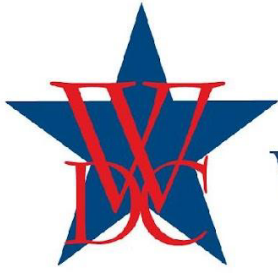
Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB 14 County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements. By improving data collection and reporting on school bullying and harassment, this bill will improve the ability of school administration to understand and address bullying and harassment faced by students. While the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are already required to report on bullying and harassment, the current report combines reporting on all races and ethnicities, all religions, and all perceived sexual orientations in groupings that obscure the specific ways in which students may be targeted for their identities. HB 14 will enable the collection of better, more actionable data on the personal characteristics targeted by bullying and harassment.

The bill will amend the current process to disaggregate the data for the LEA and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) report on bullying, harassment and intimidation by specific races, ethnicities, religions and other designated classes. This additional information is vital to school administrators' ability to identify targeted groups and the ways in which individuals in those groups are targeted—and so to design district, school, and classroom strategies to address bullying and harassment. The bill will also require each district to share the data with its community via district website.

Improved reporting is especially important now; bullying and harassment continues to rise since the pandemic. In the most recent MSDE Report on Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation increased statewide by over 12%. Only five LEAs had decreased incidents, but others had very high increases, including Montgomery County, which saw a 40% increase in these incidents.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are key drivers of chronic absenteeism, which has increased significantly since 2020. When individuals are specifically targeted for their identities in school or by fellow students out of school, they are likely to disengage. In addition to school absence, bullying and harassment can contribute to mental health issues, specifically when the bullying is focused on characteristics that the youth cannot change. Other detrimental effects (according to a review of research published in the Journal of Child



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Psychology and Psychiatry)¹ include lifelong impacts on physical health and socioeconomic status. The authors recommend that interventions need to clearly identify the underlying factors.

This bill is essential to the ability of schools to intervene in bullying and harassment. It will enable the collection, analysis and sharing of more and better data to better understand bullying, harassment and intimidation incidents in school. This data is critical to the ability of school administrators to understand and address bullying and harassment, improve school climate, and enable more children to feel safe in school.

We ask for your support for HB 14 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Cynthia
Rubenstein
WDC President

Karen Finn
WDC Children and
Youth Subcommittee
Chair

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy
Chair

¹ Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, April 2018, Vol. 59, Issue 4, pg 405-421
<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12841>

MCSS HB 14 letter of support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Buckheit

Position: FAV

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

Bill:	House Bill 14	Date:	January 27, 2026
Title:	County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements	Committee:	Ways and Means
Position:	Favorable	Contact:	Kimberly Buckheit kimberly.buckheit1@maryland.gov 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for House Bill 14.

Safe schools are inclusive environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship. School safety includes physical and emotional well being. MCSS recognizes the importance of distinguishing bully, harassment, or intimidation behavior that is motivated by an individual's personal characteristics. Doing so allows school officials to respond in a manner that decreases the likelihood of hate, bias motivated behavior from occurring in the future.

Gathering information at the school level about the occurrence of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that were motivated by a real or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or group informs appropriate next steps to mitigate and remediate. Awareness allows school leaders to engage in strategies to mitigate impact to individuals who have been harmed, and direct services toward instruction and remediation at the individual and school level.

Using a public health informed approach to address the problem of hate and bias requires engagement by a wide range of school safety partners. Behavior occurs across environments; school, home, recreation, online, thus efforts to ameliorate the problem should cross settings. Posting incident data at the local level, required by HB 14, operates from the premise that transparency leads to solution focused action. MCSS remains committed to collaborating with MSDE and local school systems in support of achieving the intended outcomes.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above, and MCSS respectfully requests that the committee give House Bill 14 a favorable report.



HB14 Bullying Info FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Salganik

Position: FAV



Committee: Ways and Means

Testimony: HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements Sponsored by Linda Foley

Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD

Submitting: Laura Salganik, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

Hearing Date: January 29, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Wilkins, Vice Chairwoman Feldmark, and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council is submitting this testimony in favor of: HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

In an effort to reduce this type of behavior, HB14, sponsored by Delegate Linda Foley would alter the contents of a school bullying, harassment, and intimidation form to require the identification of certain specific motivators behind these intolerable incidents. Alarming, FBI data reveals that hate crimes in schools have more than doubled over the past five years; the most frequent victims are Black, LGBTQ+ and Jewish students. It is noteworthy, however, that antisemitism or hate crimes against Jewish students, are growing in schools at an alarming rate. It is critical that this growth be stopped as quickly and efficiently as possible. To stem the growth, not only for Jews but for all affected groups, institutions must have the objective capability to identify where and when it occurs in order to take appropriate remedial action.

This Bill, when enacted, will provide significantly more in-depth insight into the demographic motivation for these hateful activities and will provide a more data-based roadmap for prevention and intervention. We, therefore, respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB14.

FAV_Del. Foley_HB14 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Foley

Position: FAV

LINDA FOLEY
Legislative District 15
Montgomery County



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 220
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3052
800-492-7122 Ext. 3052
Linda.Foley@house.maryland.gov

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair, Non-Energy Utilities
Subcommittee

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony: HB14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Committee: Ways and Means

Hearing Date: January 29, 2026

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill today.

I am Delegate Foley, and I am presenting HB14, which amends existing law to ensure hate-bias incident data that is already being reported by K-12 public school systems will now be broken down by targeted victim groups and posted on a school system's website.

Currently, state law requires school systems to have a hate-bias reporting form. While these forms vary by school system, they ultimately provide information on the perceived nature of bias incidents along with other information about the alleged incidents. This information is ultimately compiled in aggregate and sent to different entities, including the Attorney General's office, which issues an annual statewide report.

However, when the information gets to the Attorney General's office, it is expressed as a percentage of total bullying and harassment incidents, rather than in raw numbers. The Office of the Attorney General indicated that it is sometimes challenging for their office to get these numbers — they aren't readily available to the public.

The bill before you would simply cause school systems to disaggregate the information they have collected and report the raw numbers of hate-bias incidents broken down by targeted victim groups. In other words, a school system's report — which can be as simple as one page or a chart — would show the raw number of antisemitic, anti-black, anti-lgbtq+, misogynistic, anti-immigrant, and other hate incidents, for example.

Montgomery County Public Schools is one school system that makes these data points available. Other school systems do not report these numbers in a way that's easily accessible to the public.

In 2024, there were 291 school-related hate incidents, roughly 1.6 per school day, in Montgomery County. Notably, of the 291 school-related bias incident reports, 60 incidents involved a swastika, and 16 included references to Hitler and/or the Nazi salute. In Montgomery County Public Schools, 43% of 2024 hate incidents targeted Black students. From August 2023 to March 2024, 10% of hate-bias incidents in Montgomery County Public Schools targeted LGBTQ+ students.

All school systems have this data. This bill would require them to break it down by targeted victim groups and post it on their websites. The timeline for posting this data fits in with the existing timeline that school systems already must abide by.

To be clear, these reports would contain raw numbers by system. There would not be any identifying personal information or a school-by-school breakdown.

We've been grateful to get input with various stakeholders in drafting this bill, including the Office of the Attorney General, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Baltimore Jewish Council, ADL, the Maryland Center for School Safety, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, former President of the Montgomery County Board of Education Julie Yang, the Maryland Civil Rights Commission, State Police, MSEA, and others.

This bill is endorsed by the Latino Caucus and Jewish Caucus and has other support you will hear and read about today.

Those discussions did not reveal any opposition to this bill. All agreed that having this information is useful and needed. It would help school systems better direct resources to combat hate of various groups; would enable parents and community members to have easily accessible information regarding hate in their school system; and overall would reveal what type of hate is occurring in our school systems.

This bill has wide support from stakeholders on all sides of this issue. The bill simply amends existing law. It fits in seamlessly with existing practices without adding an excessive burden to school administrators. Having this data is another step in ensuring our school systems are safer for all.

I urge a favorable report on HB14, and I am happy to answer any questions.

HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Har

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins, Chair
Jessica Feldmark, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: 1/29/2026

RE: HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying,
Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collecting and
Reporting Requirements

The MLLC supports HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collecting and Reporting Requirements

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0014.

Hate-bias incidents in schools across the nation continue to increase. As a result, it is important that Maryland has the necessary data required to track and understand the landscape. In 2024, about 10% of nationwide reported hate crime offenses occurred in school. 15% of nationwide hate crime offenses motivated by race, ethnicity, or ancestry targeted Hispanic or Latino individuals.

Currently, data from schools is collected via hate-bias reporting forms, but is not then disaggregated by the targeted victim group. This makes it difficult to understand the actual raw number of incidents reported. Under this legislation, school systems will be required to categorize and publish hate-bias incident data by the targeted victim group on the school system's website. The bill ties neatly into existing law to ensure it is nonburdensome to school systems by using readily available information that is already being collected, but not sufficiently reported.

This legislation is a crucial step toward addressing hate-bias incidents targeting Latino and Hispanic students across Maryland. By making this data publicly accessible, all stakeholders can ensure that all students are learning in safe and supportive environments.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0014.

Melinda Littell_HB0014_Favorable_012626.pdf

Uploaded by: Melinda Littell

Position: FAV

Testimony Favorable to HB0014

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

January 26, 2026

Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair; Delegate Jessica Feldmark, Vice Chair; and esteemed members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Melinda Littell and I am writing to ask you to vote in favor of HB0014.

This House bill would improve upon the existing reporting process in Maryland public schools relating to alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation occurring on school property, sponsored events, while traveling to or from school, or through electronic communication (Bullying Incidents).

The harmful effects of bullying are well-documented. Students have a right to learn in a safe, productive, and inclusive environment that is free from bullying and intimidation. In furtherance of this goal, the Maryland legislature has already adopted anti-bullying laws specifically requiring county state boards of education to use a standardized report form to collect information concerning Bullying Incidents, and to submit summaries of the report forms to the State Board of Education by January 31 each year.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the collection and reporting process lacks important information about the motivation behind the incidents, and each county school board decides what data to track. This information could provide insights to educators, parents, and policymakers interested in combatting bullying in our schools. One key data point that should be tracked is whether the Bullying Incident was believed to have been motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic of the victim. Specifically, the standardized report forms should include whether the Bullying Incident was motivated by a person's race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. In turn, this categorized data should be included in the annual reports to the State Board of Education, and it should be made easily accessible to the public.

HB0014 would add this information about the reasons for bullying to the standardized report forms and require the annual report to the State Board of Education to the number of Bullying Incidents determined to be motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or a group, disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic. It would also require each county board to post this disaggregated information in a prominent location on its website.

We should not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation based on personal characteristics in any setting, least of all our public schools. Considering the current climate in which hate speech and discrimination are on the rise, it is important to stand up for vulnerable persons, including members of the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, people all backgrounds and socioeconomic status. I believe these enhancements to the existing process for reporting and publicizing data on bullying in Maryland public schools would help inform parents, raise awareness about the reasons behind bullying, and document the prevalence of the problems in specific areas. Please help improve the process for combatting bullying by voting favorably on HB0014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Littell

Arnold, D33C

Testimony in support of HB0014 - Bullying Informat

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0014_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

01/29/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0014- POSITION: FAVORABLE

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

TO: Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0014, **County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

To develop targeted strategies to deal with bullying, harassment or intimidation in our schools it requires we identify who is most affected by these actions. The collection of this data is not currently occurring; this bill is a remedy to that lack of information.

This bill serves to alter the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation form to require, if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, the identification of those personal characteristics, if known; etc.

The Peoples Law Library of Maryland is an excellent resource on these problems.¹ The Kennedy-Kreiger Institute also has a study on this problem.² The National Bullying Prevention Center has some horrifying statistics about the issue.³

This bill will permit Maryland to tackle the problem with clear information on the dimensions of this misconduct occurring in our schools.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0014.

¹ <https://www.peoples-law.org/bullying>

² <https://www.kennedykrieger.org/sites/default/files/library/documents/patient-care/centers-and-programs/center-for-autism-and-related-disorders/bullying-harassment-intimidation-students-maryland-public-schools.pdf>

³ <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/stats/>

HB0014_SevaGandhi_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Seva Gandhi

Position: FAV

Hearing 1/29 1:00 PM
Seva Gandhi
Bethesda MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON HB0014- POSITION: FAVORABLE

**County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information
Collection and Reporting Requirements**

TO: Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Seva Gandhi

My name is Seva Gandhi. I am a resident of District 16 and a junior at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0014, County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC) for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. I am a part of the WDC's NextGen initiative, which empowers young people to have a voice on the state and county level.

As a student and an Asian American — a demographic whose data is commonly aggregated — this issue hits close to home. By improving data collection and reporting on school bullying and harassment, this bill will improve the ability of school administration to understand and address bullying and harassment faced by students. While the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are already required to report on bullying and harassment, the current report combines reporting on all races and ethnicities, all religions, all perceived sexual orientations in groupings that obscure the specific ways in which students may be targeted for their identities. HB0014 will enable the collection of better, more actionable data on the personal characteristics targeted by bullying and harassment.

The bill will amend the current process to disaggregate the data for the LEA and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) report on bullying, harassment and intimidation by specific races, ethnicities, religions and other designated classes. This additional information is vital to school administrators' ability to identify targeted groups and the ways in which individuals in those groups are targeted—and so to design district, school, and classroom strategies to address bullying and harassment. The bill will also require each district to share the data with its community via district website.

Improved reporting is especially important now; bullying and harassment continues to rise since the pandemic. In the most recent MSDE Report on Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation increased statewide by over 12%. Only five LEAs had decreased incidents, but others had very high increases, including Montgomery County, which saw a 40% increase in these incidents.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are key drivers of chronic absenteeism, which has increased significantly since 2020. When individuals are specifically targeted for their identities in school or by fellow students out of school, they are likely to disengage. In addition to school absence, bullying and harassment can contribute to mental health issues, specifically when the bullying is focused on characteristics that the youth cannot change. Other detrimental effects (according to a review of research published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry) include lifelong impacts on physical health and socioeconomic status. The authors recommend that interventions need to clearly identify the underlying factors.

This bill is essential to the ability of schools to intervene in bullying and harassment. It will enable the collection, analysis and sharing of more and better data to better understand bullying, harassment and intimidation incidents in school. This data is critical to the ability of school administrators to understand and address bullying and harassment, improve school climate, and enable more children to feel safe in school.

I ask for your support for HB0014 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

MD HB 14 Testimony ADL 1.29.2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Tali Cohen

Position: FAV



**Maryland General Assembly
House Ways and Means Committee**

HB 14 – An Act concerning County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Testimony of Tali Cohen
ADL Washington, D.C. Regional Director
January 29, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and members of the Committee. My name is Tali Cohen, and I am the Regional Director of the ADL Washington, DC region. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in **support of HB 14**, which would strengthen data collection regarding hate and bias incidents in Maryland’s K-12 schools.

Since its inception in 1913, ADL has had a timeless mission to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Dedicated to combatting antisemitism, prejudice, and bigotry of all kinds, ADL has long been at the forefront of efforts to deter and counter antisemitic incidents.

HB 14 does something simple but essential: it requires schools to identify and track the specific personal identity characteristics that motivate bullying and harassment incidents, and it requires transparency by making that data publicly available. ADL strongly believes that data drives policy; we cannot address what we do not measure.

According to ADL's 2024 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, Maryland had the sixth-highest number of antisemitic incidents in the country—356 incidents across the state, with 107 of those occurring in K-12 schools. That's 107 times that Jewish students experienced harassment, vandalism or assault in their schools. And we know from research that many incidents go unreported, meaning the actual number is likely much higher.

These aren't just statistics. They represent students who are taunted with Holocaust jokes, who see swastikas drawn on their notebooks, and who are threatened simply because they are Jewish. Sadly, there are many stories I could share. One example right here at home in Maryland is from March 2024 where three 13-year-old students at Plum Point Middle School in Calvert County were charged with a hate crime after displaying swastikas, making Nazi salutes, and offensive comments to a classmate simply because of the



classmate's religious beliefs. Hate and harassment like this can persist in our schools if it is not identified, tracked, and ultimately addressed.

HB14 will help schools and policymakers understand the scope and nature of bias-motivated bullying. When we track data by the motivating characteristic—whether that is religion, race, national origin or another protected category—we can identify patterns, allocate resources effectively and implement targeted interventions. This is how we move from awareness to action.

Additionally, when county boards post this data publicly, it creates accountability. Parents, educators and community members can see what is happening in their schools and work together to address it.

Every student deserves to learn in an environment free from fear and harassment. By passing this bill, Maryland would be taking a critical step towards making that a reality.

Thank you for your time today. We urge the Committee to release HB 14 with a favorable report.

HB 14 Letter - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Dickerson

Position: FAV



January 26, 2026

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House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Bill: House Bill 14 – County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Position: Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, is writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements. HB 14 will make a significant improvement to the current school bullying reporting form and enables more effective and targeted interventions to address and to prevent bullying in Maryland's public schools.

Student-on-student bullying in our schools has been a significant problem for a long time, and it has become substantially worse with the advent of cell phones and social media. Bullying can have a seriously adverse impact on a student's mental health. Bullying leads in some cases to intense anxiety, school avoidance, and even suicide. Maryland school systems have long recognized this issue and have made attempts to address it with well-crafted prevention and awareness programs, and with appropriate responses for both victims and perpetrators. Some years ago, MSDE established a standardized bullying incident report form for students and parents, and it made a meaningful difference in many cases. The new form provided school administrators with information to address the incident. Data are reported on system websites and to MSDE annually and they issue detailed reports based on the data provided. School systems also use this data to develop interventions at school and at system-wide levels.

HB 14 will make a substantial and necessary improvement in the data which are collected and reported by adding (when possible), the actual or perceived personal characteristic of the victim targeted by the bully. As defined in current law, these include race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. Currently this information is not included in the bullying report form. Collecting and analyzing this information will enable schools and school systems to better address the issue through more targeted prevention and intervention programs for many of these vulnerable students.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 14. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of MPA's Legislative Committee, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
President

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

HB 14 Ways and Means SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT COALI

Uploaded by: Abbie Ellicott

Position: FWA

Ways and Means Committee

HB 14 Favorable with Amendment

Dear Chairperson Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

We are members of the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students; our mission is to provide support for LGBTQIA youth through education, policy and advocacy.

We are urging you to give a favorable vote for HB 14, with an amendment outlined below. Currently, the public doesn't have access to specific information about bullying, harassment, and bias incidents in our public schools. It is essential that this data be made public.

In our role as advocates for LGBTQIA youth, we hear of numerous examples of LGBTQIA students being targeted specifically because of their gender identity or orientation. For example, students have reported being told they should die, being pushed and shoved, having personal property like pride symbols destroyed, and being verbally harassed with homophobic slurs. Some students leave school or are scared to attend school because they do not feel safe. Research shows that the majority of middle and high school students who are LGBTQIA report being bullied or harassed in school <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.

HB 14 is essential because it helps the community know better what types of risks are present in their schools. Parents and students need this knowledge so they can make safe decisions regarding their children's schooling. Community leaders, BOE reps, elected officials and SROs need this information so they can do their jobs effectively.

HB 14 Proposed Amendment

Each county website will report the number and type of bullying and harassment incidents that occur at each school. This will provide important information for families, schools, elected officials and lawmakers as they make choices about which school district to reside in, and what interventions are needed in different schools and communities.

We strongly urge you to give a favorable report to HB 14 with the proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students (Facilitator -- Abbie Ellicott)



HB14 Favorable 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FWA

Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 14
Favorable with Amendment

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

Please give House Bill 14, regarding the collection and reporting of bullying, harassment, and intimidation by the county boards of education, a favorable report with an amendment (as described below.)

It's important to identify the prevalence of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of students based on personal characteristics so that any trends can be noted for further interventions. This information should be posted on the county board websites so that the community (and potential community members), especially parents of students, can be informed.

I respectfully request an amendment to this bill for counties to also track this type of bullying **per school** within each county so that administrators can address the issue in their individual schools. It is likely that some schools within a county have a greater problem with personal characteristic-based bullying, harassment, and intimidation than others, and individual school and community cultures may need specific types of responses.

Please consider my amendment and give House Bill 14 a favorable report. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

HB 14 GLSEN Maryland 2026 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaden Farris

Position: FWA

BILL: HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

DATE: January 29, 2026

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Jaden Farris, jaden@md.glsen.org

As the state chapter of the leading national organization centered on creating and sustaining inclusive K-12 education for LGBTQIA+ students, GLSEN Maryland supports House Bill 14. The passage of this bill will help foster safe educational settings for all Marylanders by creating processes for accountability and transparency for acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ youth.

Research by GLSEN National¹ finds that **LGBTQ+ students experience high rates of bullying, harassment, and intimidation**, with 83% reporting feeling unsafe at school. **LGBTQ+ students of color are most likely to experience bullying, harassment, and intimidation** at school.

Experiencing a hostile school climate is associated with greater rates of absenteeism, lower GPA, lower graduation rates, and being less likely to go on to college (GLSEN, 2021). Thus, **it is in the best interest of students and our broader community to create supportive school climates for LGBTQ+ youth.**

Creating clear bullying, harassment, and intimidation reporting mechanisms which are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students provide an opportunity for Maryland school systems to document these incidents in our public schools. Making data on the number of reports received publicly available ensures that parents and guardians have critical information about the climate in their children's schools. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, **collecting information on bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ students in schools serves a preventative function, working to improve school climate.** Further research also finds that school policies which explicitly include LGBTQIA+ youth are safer for LGBTQIA+ students in comparison to schools with generic anti-bullying and harassment policies².

To further strengthen HB 14 and enhance its transparency goals, we respectfully request a friendly amendment to require that the data also be disaggregated by individual schools, in addition to being disaggregated by motivating personal characteristics. School-level disaggregation would provide parents, guardians, educators, and policymakers with meaningful insight into school climate conditions, allow for targeted supports where they are most needed

Accordingly, GLSEN Maryland respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB0014.

¹ Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

² Kull, Ryan & Greytak, Emily & Kosciw, Joseph & Villenas, Christian. (2016). Effectiveness of School District Antibullying Policies in Improving LGBT Youths' School Climate. Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. 3. 407-415. 10.1037/sgd0000196.

House Bill 14 Favorable One Pasadena.pdf

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FWA

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

Montgomery County Board of Education_HB 14_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Patricia Ursprung

Position: FWA



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: House Bill 14

TITLE: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

DATE: January 29, 2026

POSITION: Support with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports House Bill 14 with a recommended amendment.

This bill requires local education agencies (LEA) to collect and report on its website data concerning bullying incidents that occur in schools under the control of the LEA, disaggregated by motivating personal characteristic. Per the bill language, the data would have to be posted annually on the LEA's website by January 31.

The Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) supports this bill and its intent to increase transparency regarding bullying incidents in schools. However, the Board recommends that the bill be amended to delay the proposed reporting deadline. Currently, LEAs must report substantiated bullying data to Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) by January 31. MSDE acknowledges and compiles the data into a state-wide report that is published sometime in the spring. The Board believes any reporting on an individual LEA's website should not occur until after MSDE has issued its annual report (recommendation is posting on the LEA's website no later than 30 days after the MSDE report is published). This ensures that the data reported by both agencies will be the same without possible discrepancies that will only serve to confuse the public, rather than make them better-informed.

This simple change, which represents a delay of only a couple months from what is proposed in the bill, will help improve transparency, which also ensuring accuracy. The Montgomery County Board of Education supports House Bill 14 with the proposed amendment.

2026 HB0014 Testimony against 2026-01-29.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against HB0014

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable report on HB0014

I oppose

Altering the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation form to require, if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, **marital status**, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, the identification of those personal characteristics, if known.

I believe bullying is usually the result of feeling inferior by the perpetrator and that tormenting victims makes them feel superior. Victims are generally chosen moiré often because they are perceived to be weaker than the bully regardless of their physical characteristics.

This bill will just add to the non-educational workload of the school staff. In my experience, the bullies were equal opportunity perpetrators. Generally they were older and larger than we were. It did not matter if we were white, black, Hispanic or Asian. Often, those who were socially awkward, and/or were considered nerds or geeks were picked on regardless of race. Some of us would fit several of the characteristics to be recorded.

Once collected, what will be done with the data? Will staff be tasked to cross-reference the characteristics of the bully to the characteristics of the victims? Then, what will be done with the results of the analysis?

I believe the school system staff has more important things to do than to guess which characteristics of the victims possibly motivated the attacks. Gathering this data and posting it to a website will tend to further divide the students and parents in our current culture of identity politics. Acquiring this data will just be a waste of time and effort and possibly make things worse. Please enter an unfavorable report on HB0014.

Alan Lang
45 Marys Mount Road
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HB0014_ County Boards of Education - Bullying, Ha

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

[HB0014](#): County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit my **strong opposition to HB 0014 — County Boards of Education: Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation — Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

While the underlying issue of bullying and student safety is unquestionably important, **HB 0014** would impose **overly broad and burdensome reporting requirements** on county boards of education and school systems without clear evidence that such mandates would meaningfully improve student outcomes. Mandating additional collection and publication of information **risks** diverting limited time and resources away from direct support for students, educators and administration who are on the front lines addressing behavior concerns.

There are several reasons this bill is concerning:

1. **Administrative Burden:** Requiring county boards to collect, compile, and report extensive data places substantial administrative demands on school systems. At a time when schools are stretched thin — with staffing shortages, learning recovery needs, and behavioral health challenges — adding new reporting mandates could pull attention and resources away from direct student support.
2. **Unclear Benefit vs. Cost:** The bill does not clearly demonstrate how the expanded data collection will lead to better prevention or intervention strategies. Schools already track incidents of bullying and harassment through existing systems. Layering new reporting requirements may create duplicate efforts without adding meaningful insight for educators, parents, or policymakers.
3. **Privacy Concerns:** Increasing the scope of reported information raises potential privacy implications for students and families. Sensitive information about individual students could be inadvertently exposed or misinterpreted, even if well-intentioned. Ensuring student safety should never come at the cost of compromising privacy or stigmatizing students.
4. **Focus on Compliance Over Solutions:** Heavy reporting requirements can shift the focus toward checking boxes rather than identifying and implementing effective, research-based interventions that address the root causes of bullying and harassment. Schools should be empowered to develop responsive student support systems rather than weighed down by rigid reporting structures.

Rather than imposing new statewide mandates, policymakers should explore **targeted support, evidence-based training, and flexible tools** that help educators prevent and address bullying in ways that reflect the unique needs of individual communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **vote against HB 0014**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Trudy Tibbals

HB 14 - State Board_MSDE - LOI.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Donna Gunning

Position: INFO

TO: Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

DATE: January 29, 2026

POSITION: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this Letter of Information regarding **HB14**, which proposes amendments to existing law to expand reporting and transparency regarding bullying, harassment, and intimidation in public schools, including updated reporting forms, public posting of disaggregated incident data, and additional annual reporting by county boards and MSDE.

All students have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation, and MSDE is committed to fostering safe, inclusive, and relationship-focused learning environments that promote both academic and personal growth for every student. Notably, MSDE currently collects comprehensive data on bullying incidents from every local education agency, disaggregated by factors such as race, religion, national origin, and gender, and compiles it into an annual report for the General Assembly. The report goes beyond basic counts, providing insights into offenders’ motives, investigations, and the interventions, supports, and corrective actions schools implement, ensuring transparency, accountability, and actionable information to guide policies and maintain safe, supportive schools for all students.

The current Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Investigation Form already collects information on alleged motives and actions or comments based on personal characteristics, as outlined in HB 14. While the bill requires identification of *motivating* personal characteristics “if known,” it does not specify who is responsible for making that determination—school-level staff or the local education agency (LEA). It also does not specify at what point in the investigative process this determination should occur. Without clear direction, LEAs may apply this requirement inconsistently. To ensure uniform implementation and meaningful, substantiated data statewide, MSDE will need to issue clarifying guidance if this bill becomes law.

Because incident report forms are often completed early in the investigative process, there is a risk that identified motivating characteristics reflect allegations or conjecture rather than substantiated findings. Clarification as to whether the information should represent preliminary claims or verified determinations would help prevent misinterpretation of the data. In addition, disaggregating incidents by motivating personal characteristics may result in very small numbers in some LEAs, raising concerns about student privacy and potential indirect identification, even when personally identifiable information is removed.

Determining a student’s motivation for a bullying incident is often subjective and not easily verifiable, and assigning this responsibility to school-level staff may present challenges. Requiring staff to make and record such determinations could result in unsubstantiated or inaccurate information being included in student records, raising potential FERPA-related concerns, particularly if such information is publicly reported or posted independently by county boards in ways that may lead to inconsistent presentation, terminology, or context. MSDE would need to provide standardized templates or guidance to ensure

clarity and consistency across LEA websites. Currently, MSDE publishes statewide bullying data in aggregated form. Clarification is needed on how local posting requirements will align with existing state-level reporting to avoid confusion or duplication.

Finally, MSDE anticipates that HB 14 may have operational implications for LEAs, as they would be responsible for determining whether incidents were motivated by actual or perceived personal characteristics. Implementation would necessitate significant operational changes, such as updates to reporting forms, staff training, data collection and validation processes, website management, and potential IT system modifications to ensure compliance.

The Department respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **HB 14** is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Crastley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.

HB 14 - LOI - Disaggregating Bullying & Harassment

Uploaded by: Jessica Goff

Position: INFO



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BILL: House Bill 14
TITLE: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements
HEARING DATE: January 29, 2026
POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, offers this **Letter of Information for House Bill 14, County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**, and appreciates the General Assembly's commitment to eliminating discrimination in our school systems.

House Bill 14 would add a requirement to the standardized form for reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The form would now have to include if the incident is believed to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by any of the following actual or perceived personal characteristics: race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. The bill would also require county boards to post information in a prominent location on their website about the number of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation reported to the state board by the county board that were determined to be motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or a group, disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic.

MABE supports transparency, accountability, and measures taken to identify the prevalence of or trends in bullying, harassment, or intimidation in school systems. The information collected could help strengthen prevention and intervention strategies systemwide. However, we have three items that we would like to highlight: administrative burden, unintentional disclosure of students' identity, and clarifying the phrase, "that were determined to be motivated by" to mean after a complete and impartial investigation.

Administrative Burden

Under Maryland Education Article section 7-424(e), each local board of education must submit to the State Board of Education summaries of report forms it has received. While we see the value in collecting the disaggregated data and even in reporting it to the

State Board, the additional step of requiring local school boards to post the data on their website is an unnecessary burden. This would likely require county boards to divert limited resources from core prevention supports. Rather, the State Board already publishes the summary data. It would be less burdensome for the State Board to add the data it collects to its existing reporting structure. Although, for the reasons identified immediately below, MABE recommends that the State Board adhere to the current requirements and only publish summary information on its website.

Unintentional Disclosure of Student's Identity

While disaggregating data *could* lead to targeted prevention and supports, there is a risk that, especially in small school systems, this disaggregated information could still, even with personally identifiable information removed, lead to the disclosure of a student's identity. For instance, in a school system with a relatively homogenous racial makeup, reporting outcomes for a small subgroup—particularly when combined with other readily available characteristics such as grade level, program participation, or disability status—could make it possible to infer the identity of an individual student, thereby undermining student privacy and confidentiality protections. This is why, in compliance with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), [current Maryland State Department of Education \(MSDE\) policy](#) prohibits disclosure of data with an N size of less than 10. As a result, it is likely that much of the disaggregated data that would be collected and reported under section 7-424(f) could not be published.

While we support transparency, we feel the risks of potentially, albeit unintentionally, identifying students outweighs the benefits of requiring the county board to post the disaggregated data on its website. Therefore, MABE recommends removal of the requirement in section 7-424(f) for county boards to publish disaggregated data on their website. In the alternative, MABE recommends that the State Board continue to publish the summary information on its website.

Clarification

If section 7-424(f) is not removed, **we recommend clarifying, with additional specificity, that the phrase “that were determined to be motivated by…” means after a complete and impartial investigation.** In discussions with local school systems, many worried that the requirement in 7-424(f) would result in the reporting of unsubstantiated claims. As we read the language, we understand it to mean only claims that were fully investigated and verified, but additional clarity would remove ambiguity in interpretation.



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Therefore, MABE recommends the language be revised to state, “that were determined after a complete and impartial investigation to be motivated by actual or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or a group, disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic...”

HB14 Informational (Written).pdf

Uploaded by: Kenzie Funk

Position: INFO



Informational Testimony for

House Bill 14: County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

House Ways and Means Committee

January 29, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can feel safe and supported to learn and thrive in their school community. Central to that vision is addressing the systemic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized students, including Black and Brown students, Multilingual learners, students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and students from low income communities. For these reasons, **Strong Schools Maryland offers informational testimony for HB 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements.**

House Bill 14 takes a step towards greater transparency and accountability by strengthening how we collect and publicly report data on bullying and harassment. The proposed legislation aims to add a component Bullying Report Form that would specify if the bullying incident is believed to have been motivated by actual or perceived characteristics of the impacted students. The legislation then requires that each County Board publish the disaggregated data on their website. By requiring this disaggregated data collection and reporting, this bill aims to illuminate patterns of harm that often remain hidden when data is aggregated. Most importantly, the intent of the bill is for school systems and counties to better understand how bias based bullying and harassment affects students and allocate actual resources where they are needed in order to address it in an equitable manner.

Safe school environments are a foundational component of educational equity. When students experience bullying or harassment due to race, disability, gender identity, immigration status, or socioeconomic background, it directly undermines their feelings of inclusion, safety, sense of belonging, and academic engagement. HB14 aligns with the Blueprint as its intent is to target supports to protect students well being in schools. We can not begin to address systemic discrimination and interpersonal harassment and bullying, if we do not know who is being impacted.

While we support the intent of the bill, we urge the Committee to carefully consider possible unintended consequences of implementing such a policy. Key considerations include the following:

- Accurately identifying motivating characteristics requires trauma-informed practices. Without adequate resources and training of staff responsible for identifying the “actual or perceived” personal characteristics, there is a risk of inconsistent/biased reporting and/or underreporting, particularly in communities where trust between families and school systems is fragile.
- While we support the collection and disaggregation of this data, we also urge for the prioritization of student privacy, especially in smaller communities where individuals may be more identifiable.
- Protecting privacy should not limit schools’ ability to respond to harm. We encourage the collection of detailed school-level data, even when not publicly published, so districts can identify patterns, partner with directed communities, and direct resources and interventions where they are most needed.

With thoughtful implementation support, HB14 can serve as a powerful tool for resources allocation, accountability, and student well-being and safety.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.