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BILL: House Bill 1560
TITLE: Education – Family Life and Human Sexuality Curriculum – Consent
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 14, 2017
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 1560.

MABE recognizes the intent of this legislation to facilitate the enhancement of school curriculum and instruction on human sexuality on the important subject of consent. However, as this committee knows, MABE opposes any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board. Therefore, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, but rather a strong opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of any one concept or content item.

There have been various attempts by the General Assembly in recent years to mandate public school curriculum by requiring that a particular subject be added or removed from the curriculum. However, in creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for curriculum and assessment. The State Board establishes State standards and statewide graduation requirements; the local boards implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that standards are met and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements. State and local assessment programs ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work.

Therefore, in the context of the recognizing the essential role of the state legislature in enacting laws which establish the framework for key elements of the State's approach to public education, MABE continues to support local decision-making authority in developing curriculum.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1560.