

BILL: House Bill 544
TITLE: Public and Nonpublic Schools - Classwork and Assessment Involving Live and Dead Animals - Student Choice Policy
DATE: February 15, 2018
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 544.

MABE appreciates the bill's intent to ensure that students who do not wish to participate in vivisection of animals not be required to do so. MABE's understanding is that the intended outcome of this legislation is actually being carried out in school systems, schools and classrooms across the state. Students are being granted the reasonable right to opt out of activities involving animals, and are being provided appropriate alternative instructional activities.

Generally, MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, courses of instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board of Education. Exceptions to this rule are rare.

MABE firmly believes that in creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for guiding and delivering a high quality statewide system of public education through state standards and accountability measures, and locally governed and administered curriculum, teaching, and learning.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 544.