

BILL: House Bill 194
TITLE: Education - Family Life and Human Sexuality Curriculum - Sexting
DATE: January 27, 2022
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 194, which would require that an age-appropriate education program on the risks of sexting be developed and implemented by the State Board of Education, and each that each public school implement this curriculum in every grade in which Family Life and Human Sexuality curriculum is taught.

Local boards of education are committed to providing programs of instruction, health services, school facilities, and school meals designed to promote the physical and mental health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults. In this light, MABE appreciates the intent of this bill, but opposes adopting a specific student health instruction standard in this manner.

As this committee knows, MABE opposes 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. Although MABE agrees that sexting risk prevention education is a valuable component to comprehensive school health education programs, MABE maintains a strong preference for the adoption of State standards and the local discretion to achieve those standards through locally adopted curriculum and instructional tools and practices.

Again, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, certainly not education about sexting, but rather on the association's opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of any one concept or content item.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 194.