

BILL: House Bill 880
TITLE: Education - Public Middle Schools - Course on Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction
DATE: March 1, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 880, which would require that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) develop, and school systems provide a middle school course on the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction.

MABE appreciates the intent of this bill regarding the very specific topic of the lifelong consequences that can result from criminal activity, arrests, and convictions. More broadly, local boards of education are committed to providing well-rounded programs of instruction, health and behavioral health services, and athletics and other extracurricular activities designed to promote the well-being, health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults.

However, 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. 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, 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 880.