

March 8, 2023

Dear Delegate/Senator _____:

I am contacting you to share my strong opposition to House Bill 119. This bill was introduced to get local school systems to adopt the state health curriculum. The bill has been amended to be much worse. HB 119 as passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee would result in a total state takeover of local control over all curriculum frameworks, standards, and even instructional materials. I urge you to oppose HB 119 becoming law.

Specifically, this bill would mandate that local school systems follow “every element of the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction” for public schools established by the State Board of Education. The bill would also mandate that “all curriculum guides, courses of study, resource materials and other teaching aids” shall be in accordance with the state policy and program of instruction adopted by the State Board. In these alarming and unprecedented ways, HB 119 reaches into the boardroom and the classroom, severely limiting decision making of local boards, superintendents, department chairs, and teachers in the classroom.

I am also troubled that HB 119 would empower the State Superintendent of Schools to enforce local compliance by withholding massive amounts of state funding. HB 119 grants absolute authority to the State Superintendent to decide if a local school system is not following every detail of the state standards and then withhold millions of dollars in state funding.

I hope that you agree with the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) in support of local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, grading policies, and instructional programs and the adoption of statewide laws and regulations that reflect a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement. HB 119 fails this test.

For these reasons, I ask for your commitment to oppose House Bill 119 becoming law.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,