

HB0558 – Favorable ONLY with Amendment

Nelda Fink

MD District 32

Paragraph 7-401 (c) (5)(ii) should be removed. First there is no topic in the outlined education topics in (c)(3) called HIV AND AIDS PREVENTION. Without this outlined as a separate topic the requirement of it cannot be assured and creates difficulty should this topic be interspersed in other topics that the parents can opt out of.

Additionally, prevention of HIV and AIDS will delve into sexual content that the parents again may not want their child to attend. **So the state must allow** the parents to opt out of this topic / sub topic / education curriculum as well. **Thus the whole paragraph should be removed.**

Secondly, the bill must respect the parent's constitutional rights to freedom of religion, which includes the modality a family decides to use for healing and disease. Natural healing as per the scriptures will probably not be taught, and the evil of the pharmaceutical system, which is strictly forbidden in the scriptures, will likely be covered in most of this health education agenda.

In order to adhere to the First Amendment right of the US Constitution and in Article 36 of the Bill of Rights of the Maryland Constitution, which protect the person from being forced to practice a form of religion that is not according to their own religion, and especially a religion that is being forced onto the People by the State. Legally any strongly held belief is considered religion. Because the State strongly holds to the pharmaceutical model of "health" it can be easily argued that this is the State's preferred religion. While the whole Health Department and Education of the State's religion of "health" are unconstitutional, this bill has the power if written correctly, to allow the parents to opt out of the whole agenda and therefore preserve their constitutional rights to their own religion if they so choose.

Therefore paragraph (5)(I) **should allow the parent to opt out of the whole Comprehensive Health Framework** based on religious reasons. Paragraph (5)(i) should read:

(5) (I) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ESTABLISH POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND PROCEDURES FOR A PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO OPT OUT OF THE **COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH FRAMEWORK** FOR THE PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S STUDENT IN EACH GRADE IN WHICH THOSE TOPICS ARE

TAUGHT. A FRAMEWORK WHICH ALIGNS WITH THE PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S RELIGIOUS HEALING BELIEFS MAY BE SUBMITTED AS A SUBSTITUTE AND MUST BE ACCEPTED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD.

Another reason to provide the option to opt out of the whole agenda is the situation that occurred in Montgomery County in 2023. Some children's stories, which clearly had sexual content in them, were added improperly to some other educational agenda which the parents could not opt out of. While this is improper adherence of the board to topics of that particular agenda, it is worth noting that this kind of manipulation of the agendas does occur by the boards of education.

Again therefore it is only proper and only constitutional to allow the parent to opt out of **all of the Comprehensive Health Framework**. No employer nor higher educational institution will require the information that is included in these topics making these topics secondary to the goals of public education. As I previously stated the whole agenda should be removed, but that is outside the scope of this bill.

Passing this bill **only with these recommendations** will align the agenda to the Constitutions and allow the parent / guardian to exercise their rights to freedom of religion, freedom of choice in healing and freedom of education.

I pray that you seriously consider these changes to this bill.

Thank you.

Nelda Fink