



Somerset County Public Schools

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Board Members
Matthew Lankford, Chairman
Andrew Gleason, Vice Chairman
William McInturff
Allen C. Ford
Mary Beth Bozman

Bill: HB161

Title: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework - Established
County Boards of Education Curriculum Guides and Courses of Study

Date: February 18, 2025

Position: Oppose

Committee: Ways and Means
Education, Energy and Environment

Contact: Matthew Lankford, Chairman, Somerset County Board of Education

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, & The Environment Committee,

On behalf of the members of the Somerset County Board of Education (the “Board”), I am writing to express our strong OPPOSITION to HB161. If passed, this bill would result in a total takeover of local school systems’ control over all curriculum frameworks, standards, and instructional materials. The Board urges, in the strongest of terms, your opposition to HB161 becoming law.

House Bill 161 requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to develop a comprehensive health education framework; requiring each county board of education to create an age-appropriate curriculum that is consistent with the comprehensive health education framework; requiring each county board to establish policies, guidelines, and procedures for a parent or guardian to opt out of a certain topic for the parent’s or guardian’s student, subject to a certain prohibition and requirement; and generally relating to the establishment of a comprehensive health education framework in public schools.

We believe that local school systems must retain the right and responsibility to choose the curriculum content that best meets the needs of our students with discretion of what a board deems to be “age appropriate.” We oppose any actions such as this that attempt to legislate curriculum. We also believe that parents should have the ability to opt-out their child for any and all component(s) of the comprehensive health education framework, as the government has no right to force any minor child to accept and affirm sexual ideologies and

practices that undermine parental rights and moral principles. Therefore, the Board of Education of Somerset County respectfully opposes HB161 and urges an unfavorable committee report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Lankford', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Lankford, Chair
Board of Education of Somerset County