



Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director

9 Trotters Ridge Court, Catonsville, MD 21228

410-925-2183

pssamed@gmail.com

www.pssam.org

BILL: House Bill 996
TITLE: Homeschool Students in Maryland - Extracurricular Activities
DATE: February 23, 2018
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 996 authorizes a public school to allow students in home instruction programs to participate in certain extracurricular activities under certain circumstances; and requiring public schools to give placement priority to enrolled students if there are a limited number of spaces available for students in extracurricular activities.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 996, which would require public schools to allow home schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities. This law would be in conflict with existing State law.

Currently, COMAR 13A.10.01 Home Instruction, *Code of Maryland Regulation*, allows home schooled students to participate voluntarily in standardized testing, but not in other courses or activities in public school programs. In most cases, extracurricular activities are aligned with the regular curriculum of which home schooled students are not a part. In addition, school administrators charged with the overall safety and well-being of the students would be required to assume responsibility for students that are not enrolled in the public school. This bill would provide administrators with limited authority to protect the school's interests when dealing with issues concerning non-enrolled students.

Another concern regarding this bill centers on the eligibility of students who represent schools in interscholastic events. State regulations require students to be officially registered and attending a public school. Students not attending the public school would not be subjected to the same eligibility criteria because academic and attendance standards of home school are not comparable to those of the public school. In the event of injuries or other mishaps, the public school students would be covered. Most home school students would not have the same coverage. Ramifications of this legislation would result in serious challenges concerning school system liability, the extra burden on existing staff, and disruption to enrolled students.

For the reasons noted above, PSSAM **opposes** HB 996 and requests an unfavorable committee report.