



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

BILL: House Bill 138
TITLE: Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking
DATE: February 3, 2021
POSITION: Letter of Information
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

This bill requires that age-appropriate education program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault be developed and implemented by the State Board of Education and certain nonpublic schools, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

PSSAM is supportive of the intent of this bill but provides this letter of information to note that many local school systems are currently incorporating these issues in their health curriculum. We believe it is unnecessary and inappropriate for the Legislature to mandate explicit language and wording in curriculum.

Under current law each local school system must provide a comprehensive health education program for all students in prekindergarten through grade 8, and offer an education program in grades 9 through 12 that enables students to meet graduation requirements and to select health education electives. In order to graduate from a public high school in Maryland, students must complete a half credit of health; however, the State Board of Education is currently recommending this be increased to a full credit. Moving to a full credit will give additional time to address the specific concerns of human and sex trafficking without a mandate from the Legislature.

PSSAM thanks the sponsor for his interest and advocacy but firmly believes decisions regarding curriculum belong to local boards of education working together with the State Board of Education.

One Voice, One Vision for Maryland's Students

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