



Testimony for the House Ways and Means Committee

February 25, 2020

HB 1022 – Education – Alternative Schools – Reporting Requirements

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 1022 which requires each county board of education to report data and information regarding the alternative schools in their districts. This bill lists 15 categories of information that local school systems must report to Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for each alternative school.

Our state must be careful and consider the impact of derailing the path toward academic achievement for our students. The negative impact of out-of-school removals on overall academic success is undeniable. Three years ago, ACLU of Maryland advocated for a law in Maryland prohibiting the removal of pre-k through 2nd grade children except in the most extreme circumstances. Maryland law requires schools to provide interventions within the regular school setting.

When students must attend an “alternative school” for exhibiting challenging behavior, we must be sure that the learning environment in which they are placed, are held to the same standards as our public school system. This bill will help identify the demographics of the alternative schools in our state, and the processes through which students are enrolled.

Persistent race- and disability-based disparities still exist in the practice of exclusionary discipline. Given that fact, Black students or students with disabilities are more likely to be segregated from the rest of the school population. This bill requires reporting that will detail the curriculum and services that are available at alternative schools and guarantee that students have the same expectation of learning they would in their home school setting.

For the foregoing reasons, ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report for HB 1022.

