

Good morning,


I am writing to express my opposition to HB132/SB41. While the intention of this bill is good, I have serious concerns about making a vulnerable child even more vulnerable under this bill.

I stand for my children in this opposition, but as a classroom teacher, I also stand for my students. Parents cannot be taken out of the equation. As a teacher, I have been in many situations where students needed support. When I was younger and prior to becoming a parent, I have sought to help the student without the parent, and it always backfired and further complicated the situation. Parents need to be involved, and children need to be protected.


Thank you for your consideration

**OPPOSE
HB132/SB41**

Prevent Unintended Harm
to Maryland's Children




COST




Who pays the bill when a 12-year-old accesses consultation, diagnosis, or treatment without their parent or guardian?

TRANSPORTATION/ ACCESS

Where is a 12-year-old receiving services without a guardian to take them? How do they get there? Is the intention to make these school-based services? That is not a good direction to go, as we have just witnessed schools shut down for at least a year.




CONSENTING TO DIAGNOSIS/ RACISM



A mental health diagnosis can follow a child for their entire life. Parent supervision is needed. Research shows that African American boys are more likely to receive diagnoses than their white peers. What standardized tool will all practitioners use to assess which children are "capable of giving informed consent"?

CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE

A 12-year-old cannot distinguish between a good practitioner and a poor one. Recent events, like the story of Larry Nassar, a trusted elite gymnastics team doctor who was a serial abuser, highlight the potential for a child to be harmed by another adult when parents are not involved.



REMOVING PARENTS IS NOT THE ANSWER

The intention of this bill is good. Especially in this time, when teens are suffering ever increasing mental health issues and are coping with their lives being suspended during a pandemic, we want all children to get the help that they need. We do not believe this bill contributes to improved access to mental health for 12-year-old/ minor children. It ONLY removes parents from the equation.

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