



Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education

Testimony for HB1158: Calvert County - Training on 1776 Report - Referendum

House Ways and Means Committee

February 24, 2021

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE) is a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations that are committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system. We oppose HB1158 - Calvert County - Training on 1776 Report - Referendum, as it seeks to establish an American history curriculum in Calvert County public schools that is based on highly selective and biased material that has been widely rejected and characterized by many historians as "pseudohistory".

The state has a constitutional responsibility of providing a "thorough and efficient" education to all of Maryland's public school students. The 1776 Report falls unconscionably short of being "thorough". The 1776 Commission was created by President Trump on November 2, 2020 and released its 41-page report less than 3 months later. None of the commissioners were professional American historians. The report also does not identify the main authors and lacks citations and footnotes.

Based on the nature of the 1776 report, the HB1158 seeks to omit the enormous body of research on African American history and the impact of slavery in our country. At a time when our country is facing a reckoning on race, it is more important now than ever to be proactive about including and centering the history, contributions, and current day experiences of all Americans in our public school curriculum. There are bills filed this legislative session that seek to establish commissions to research and put forward recommendations to ensure that our public school curriculum includes the histories and cultures of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinx and indigenous populations. We urge the committee to support these bills (HB140, HB11, SB662), to ensure that Maryland students receive a comprehensive education that includes multicultural perspectives.

It would be a disservice to public school students in Calvert County and in all other Maryland districts to provide them with a curriculum that is intended to distort the history of our country, and dismiss and mischaracterize the struggles that many endure today. If we truly want to build unity in America, then it is critical that all of our students have access to a comprehensive curriculum on our country's history from well-informed, credible, and diverse sources.

We urge the committee to give HB1158 and unfavorable report. Thank you.