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Ways and Means Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 27, 2021

**House Bill 155 County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools -
Discrimination - Prohibition**

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **House Bill 155 County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools - Discrimination - Prohibition**, which prohibits all public and nonpublic schools that receive state funding from discriminating against any student or prospective student because of the individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Currently, state regulations establish that all public school students have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from harassment. However, unlike employment and fair housing laws in the state, Maryland's education laws do not have codified anti-discrimination protections for all schools. In recent years, there have been a number of cases where schools that receive public funds have explicitly discriminatory language, including language excluding LGBTQ students, in their student handbooks and admissions policies.

HB 155 not only deters schools from creating these discriminatory practices in the first place, but it codifies protections for students and requires schools to have written policies that prohibit discrimination. Furthermore, this bill provides students a legal complaint and remedy process if they have been discriminated against.

This committee has always fought to uphold federal civil rights laws to protect students from different types of discrimination. Schools that receive state aid are funded by all of us, including people of different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, etc. No student should have to face discrimination or be denied their right to an education, and we must ensure equal protection and fair treatment for all students. For these reasons, I ask that the committee give a **favorable** report for **House Bill 155**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jheanelle Wilkins'.

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins