

I oppose Senator Simonaire's bill, 0364, titled "Anne Arundel County – Board of Education – Parent's Right to Challenge Curriculum Act"

As a resident of Pasadena, District 31, which Senator Simonaire claims to represent, this bill should not be given a favorable recommendation, for so many reasons.

First, under Section 2, this bill purports to be an emergency bill, "necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety" -- there is no immediate threat to health and safety, so filing SB 0364 as such is a charade and a publicity stunt.

Second, I would point out, much as any other Board of Education in the state of Maryland, Anne Arundel County has serious issues to address -- my incomplete list would include: adequate pay for teachers and staff; staffing levels; transportation issues; and the continuing ever-present threat of COVID-19. Burdening them with the additional baggage of curriculum review would grind progress on other, more pressing issues, to a halt.

Third, the 3% requirement is inconsistent with the Anne Arundel County charter, requiring 10% a referendum on county actions.

Before I get to the fourth point, I would like to note that there are approximately 84,000 students in Anne Arundel County schools.

Point four, forcing a vote on any issue that violates the following ridiculous claims would require one parent to initiate it, and 3% of the parents to support it, which would be approximately 2520 valid signatures:

"The Earth is flat"

"Creationism is valid science"

"Arabic numbers should not be taught in schools"

"Trump won the 2020 election"

"CRT (Critical Race Theory) is being taught in schools"

"Jan 6. 2020 was a legitimate protest"

"Masks don't work"

"The vaccine is a secret government program to microchip us all"

Fifth, and finally, when I examine legislation, I consider how it can be turned against its initial intent. Using that lens, I would fully expect any curriculum that did not include the following to be repeatedly challenged:

"Science is real"

"Masks work"

"The COVID 19 vaccines are effective"

"Trump won the 2016 election through Russian influence"

"Jan 6, 2020 was an attempt by the minority party to establish a dictatorship"

"Accurate history must be taught, including our abuses of the Black, Native, Japanese, Chinese, and other minorities in the United States"

“LGBTQ are people”

In short, I would expect passage to bog down the Anne Arundel County Board of Education in a constant barrage of petitions, often contradictory to one another, and be unable to perform their duties in maintaining and advancing education in our county.

I am happy to discuss any particular point at length.

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