



TESTIMONY FOR HB1152

Public Schools - Student Bill of Rights and Prohibitions on Suspensions and Expulsions

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Washington

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1152 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members appreciate that teachers have a difficult job. However, in recent years, the mechanism for dealing with students who are disruptive or disrespectful has been to send them home. This is not helpful to the student or the parents, who often do not have child care arranged and have to leave work. There used to be other mechanisms for dealing with this behavior. The child was sent out into the hall with a parent volunteer to work with them on the same lessons so they could still learn, but get the attention they needed. We need to go back to that model.

The goal of this legislation is to prevent students from being suspended or permanently expelled from school for behavior that is disruptive or disrespectful but is non-threatening and does not physically harm anyone. It re-defines what unsafe behavior is so that we reduce the number of students who are removed from school for minor infractions and are unable to learn.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.