



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
And Members of the Ways & Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **HB 0615** – Education – Prohibited Behavior on School Grounds & Property – Application -
UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members,

The intent of documenting disruptive behaviors should be to facilitate interventions that will eliminate future, more serious behaviors and their consequences. Redefining “reportable offense” and thereby failing to provide behavior modification services at the earliest opportunity is a disservice to our children and counter to our responsibilities as educators, parents and community members.

Experience has shown that the absence of consequences for bad behaviors leads to more bad behavior, often escalating to more dangerous behavior and criminal activity.

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women opposes HB 0615. Removing penalties for disruptive or threatening behavior at our institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education is counter-productive. Limiting “Reportable Offense” to apply only to an offense that does not occur at the school the student attends or an event sponsored by that school makes no sense, and threatens the safety and well-being of all – students, faculty, other staff, and the community.

Disruptive and threatening behavior is currently divided into five categories: (1) Attendance, (2) Arson, Fire or Explosives, (3) Dangerous substances, (4) Sex Offenses, (5) Attacks with a weapon, threats or fighting.

While attendance (truancy) can be disruptive to a student’s progress, it does not pose a physical threat to other students and staff. That is not the case with the other behavior categories. Allowing disruptive behavior to shut down or shout down a teacher, a visiting presenter, or another student violates everyone’s First Amendment rights.

Please give **HB 0615** an **UNFAVORABLE** Report.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman