

Written Testimony for **HB 197/ SB 68**: Public Schools - Restorative Practices
Schools - Comprehensive Plan: Please **VOTE NO** on this legislation, as it is dangerous to our children!!

Dear Ways & Means Committee & EEE Committee:

Please cast your vote **OPPOSING SB0068**.

Restorative discipline policies focus on non-punitive conflict resolution, at the expense of accountability and effective school discipline. These practices inadvertently fail to address insubordination in a way that fosters responsibility, thereby crippling the student's mental maturity. Instead of ensuring that students face appropriate consequences for their actions, such policies can undermine behavioral growth and justify violence.

This therapeutic approach to misbehavior results in **classrooms that are mismanaged, chaotic and even unsafe**. By tolerating repeated disruptions and emotional outbursts, the learning environment becomes detrimental to both students and teachers. Furthermore, due to restorative practices, schools no longer take disciplinary measures such as suspension, except in the most extreme circumstances. Until they commit egregious acts of criminality, violent students are kept in school under the guise of a therapeutic ethos.

The tragic case of Nikolas Cruz, the shooter at Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School, underscores the dangers of such policies. Despite multiple prior incidents of violence and behavioral concerns, Cruz remained in school under interventions focused on treatment rather than accountability. This failure to enforce actual consequences contributed to an environment where his escalating behavior went unchecked, ultimately culminating in his taking the life of 17 innocent lives.

Also, how do we expect our students to academically excel if merely going to school is dangerous to their well-being? No student can master academics if they are afraid for their safety!!

The same goes for all our teachers. How do we expect our teachers to show up at school with bright, smiling faces and be energized to teach our students if they also fear for their safety? We cannot expect outstanding teaching if our teachers are afraid to come into our schools every day!!

Maryland schools must prioritize policies that balance accountability with support to ensure safe and effective learning environments.

Restorative practices should not replace disciplinary measures. I urge you to oppose this bill, as it risks further eroding school discipline and jeopardizing the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and the broader community.

Please **VOTE NO** on this bill to show our teachers and students that you prioritize their safety over all else!!

Thank you for your consideration,

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother and Maryland resident