The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 72. This Bill requires the State Board of Education and each non-public school in the state to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. The program shall be taught by teachers who are trained to provide instruction on sexual abuse awareness and prevention.

Like other school systems, Anne Arundel County Public Schools currently includes sexual harassment, abuse, and assault in its current curriculum. This curriculum also examines healthy and unhealthy relationships. The intent of this Bill is already covered through our curriculum so further state mandates are not necessary. We support local decision-making in developing curriculum so that a complete and complimentary program of study can be implemented with fidelity instead of piece meal requirements from different laws and mandates. Additionally, the portion of the law that requires that the program be taught by teachers “who are trained to provide instruction on sexual abuse and assault/awareness and prevention” is not clear as there is no specified training for this specific instruction. Meeting the mandates for this Bill also may not be currently possible for this reason. We believe our current curriculum meets the intent of this Bill to ensure that students receive age-appropriate education regarding sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention and this Bill is unnecessary and overreaching into the work of the local school systems and State Board of Education.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue an UNFAVORABLE Report on House Bill 72.