The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 980 - Children Exempt From Public School Attendance - Participation in Public High School Clubs and Activities. This bill would require local school systems to allow a home-schooled child who is exempt from public school attendance to participate in public school clubs and activities beginning September 1, 2017.

Maryland public schools are committed to and required to serve all of the State’s school-aged children who are not enrolled in other educational institutions or programs, regardless of religious preferences, ability to pay tuition, or special needs. Students are exposed to a wide variety of courses and programs aimed at educating and preparing them for graduation, college and career readiness, and full participation in their nation, state, and local communities. This responsibility of local school systems does not and should not extend to home-schooled students.

The Arundel County of Board of Education supports local control of educational policy, curriculum, budgets and administration. The Board opposes legislation mandating that public schools accommodate private or home-schooled students in academic or extracurricular programs offered in the public schools. House Bill 980 would mandate such an accommodation for home-schooled students, and interferes with local decision-making authority and governance. By retaining decision-making authority at the local level, local boards of education can best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, public input, and accountability.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on House Bill 980.