Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee
County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools –
Discrimination – Prohibition (SB 993)

February 20, 2020

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For 105 years, our mission has been to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 993 ("SB 993"), which would prohibit a county board, public or nonpublic prekindergarten programs, and public or nonpublic primary or secondary schools that receive State funds from discriminating against, refusing enrollment of, expelling, or withholding privileges from any student or prospective student because of the student’s race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, and from taking retaliatory action.

In 1898, National PTA Cofounder Alice McLellan Birney said, “The National Congress of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood." These words were true then and remain true today. SB 993 complements Maryland PTA’s position that all children and youth should be able to attend school in a safe, inclusive environment that is free from discrimination. History has shown that civil rights laws effectively ensure such environments. All Maryland schools, including private schools and programs receiving grants or scholarships from public funds, must support and protect students’ civil rights.

Maryland PTA will never support the use of public funds to violate Federal civil rights laws or to discriminate. Accordingly, Maryland PTA supports Senate Bill 993 and recommends a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edna Harvin Battle

Dr. Edna Harvin Battle
President