

Testimony for SB 542

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President

SHAPE Maryland

My name is Richard Wiles and I am the president of SHAPE Maryland. SHAPE stands for the Society of Health and Physical Educators. SHAPE Maryland is an organization devoted to promoting quality health and physical education through effective professional development for teachers and promoting health and physical literacy for all. A physically literate person is someone who has the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.

SHAPE Maryland appreciates the Chair, Vice-Chair, and committee for bringing this bill up for review. Thank you Senator Young for proposing this bill. SHAPE Maryland supports this bill with amendments.

The connections between physical activity and academic achievement have been shared with in the ways and means committee of the house of delegates in the past. I don't think the committee, or those that oppose this bill, dispute the fact that physical activity increases the development of hormones that support brain functions. Those hormones are necessary to learn and retain information. Organizations who oppose this bill will do so because they say it removes local control, has funding implications, and school systems have other priorities. I believe that this has addressed some of those concerns by removing the mandate and requiring the state to collect and publish the time spent by schools on recess and physical education.

Though the Kirwan Commission reviewed funding and policy reforms to improve the quality of Maryland's public education system, it did not address the inequity of student physical activity. We know some students have safe neighborhoods to play in, parents and caregivers that can pay hundreds and/or thousands of dollars to participate in athletics teams, and schools that provide quality physical education and recess for all students. Not all Maryland students have access to those same privileges. I would highly suggest reading the [Project Play: Baltimore](#) report by the Aspen Institute.

SHAPE Maryland believes this bill will be a positive first step in collecting statewide data on recess and physical education as well as encouraging schools to offer 90 minutes of elementary physical education per week. However, we would propose that the bill be amended to align with national standards and identify a more aggressive

goal of 150 minutes per week for elementary students and 225 minutes per week for secondary students. Thank you