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Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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March 1, 2024

Senate Bill 938 - Maryland Department of Health - Public Education Campaign on Prostate, Lung, and Breast Cancer Prevention

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **Senate Bill 938 - Maryland Department of Health - Public Education Campaign on Prostate, Lung, and Breast Cancer Prevention**, which addresses the persistent health disparities impacting communities disproportionately affected by prostate, lung, and breast cancer in Maryland.

As we are all aware, cancer continues to be a significant public health concern, with breast cancer ranking as the most diagnosed cancer in Maryland in 2017. Prostate cancer follows as the second most diagnosed, and lung cancer stands as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the state, with breast cancer being the third leading cause of cancer death. Senate Bill 938 is a vital initiative aimed at developing and implementing a comprehensive public education campaign to address the factors contributing to health disparities in communities impacted by these cancers. This bill recognizes the multifaceted nature of these disparities, considering elements such as poverty, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, social injustice, and racial bias.

Public education campaigns have proven instrumental in dispelling myths surrounding cancer and promoting knowledge that can lead to more positive outcomes. By providing information on the onset, types, and multifactorial issues related to prostate, lung, and breast cancer, we can empower communities to make informed decisions about their health.

The testimony of Dr. Arthur Burnett from Johns Hopkins University emphasizes the disproportionate impact of prostate cancer on Black men. A public education campaign, as proposed by this legislation, would enhance access to comprehensive evaluations and consultations, ultimately benefiting populations disproportionately affected by this condition.

The American Lung Association's insights on lung cancer in Maryland underscore the need for increased awareness and equitable distribution of information. Senate Bill 938 aligns with the Association's call to action, recognizing that Maryland ranks 36th in the nation for lung cancer screening. The bill seeks to improve these statistics, ensuring that all communities have access to vital information and resources.

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Breast cancer, particularly affecting African American women as the second leading cause of cancer, requires focused attention. Public education campaigns can bridge knowledge gaps, especially regarding the elevated risks associated with life stressors, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and breastfeeding disparities. Senate Bill 938 is a proactive step toward addressing these issues. A well-executed public campaign allows for collaboration among various agencies, including health providers, social service organizations, and community groups. This collaborative effort can bring together a wealth of resources, making information, programs, and support accessible to underserved populations.

Senate Bill 938 is a commendable effort to address the complexities surrounding prostate, lung, and breast cancer disparities in Maryland. The proposed public education campaign has the potential to save lives, enhance access to crucial resources, and improve overall outcomes for individuals facing these challenging diagnoses.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for **Senate Bill 938 - Maryland Department of Health - Public Education Campaign on Prostate, Lung, and Breast Cancer Prevention**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Malcolm Augustine".

Senator Malcolm Augustine