

Chair Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
Health and Government Operations  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 5, 2024

Favorable Vote – HB97 – Baby Food – Toxic Heavy Metals – Testing and Labeling

RE: Letter of Support

My name is Eric Lopez, I am a resident of Maryland and a father to a 1.5 year old daughter. My little one was born at the University of Maryland and came to this world with significant health issues.

When my wife and I were preparing for the new addition to our family, our first and only child so far, we wanted to make sure that every decision we made was in the best interest of our daughter's health. She has special medical needs and we felt a heightened sense of protecting her.

In 2022, the year our daughter was born, there was a national recall of baby formula. One of the major producers of baby formula recalled their products due to bacterial contamination in the production process that led to severe illness and deaths of infants.

We were in shock and disbelief that the very products created to nourish infants was the cause of so much harm and of fatalities.

We felt like a choice was taken away from us related to something as basic and critical as food options for our daughter. We have stayed away from all baby formula because we simply could not trust the products on the market. We wish that there had been stronger laws and regulations in place back then to prevent the contamination. Which, by the way led to a national scarcity of baby formula. We saw the impact of this scarcity play out with our friends who still relied on baby formula to nourish their children.

As a resident of Maryland, I want to convey my support for HB97 and strongly urge the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable vote. Passing this critical bill will take a substantial step in holding manufacturers accountable for their products and will ensure that parents have the information they need to make the best choice for their infants. Let's keep toxins out of infants products altogether, but until then, the least we can do is let parents know what toxins lie within products on shelf.

Sincerely,

Eric Lopez  
Maryland Resident  
40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District