

February 5, 2024

Please Support [HB0097](#)

As a current public health student and future epidemiologist, I am writing to express my support for HB0097. This bill will be one of the first of its kind and call into light a concerning issue that has been disregarded for the last few years. By safeguarding the health of Maryland's youngest and most vulnerable population, we will be able to see better health outcomes in the state.

Throughout my time as an undergraduate student, I have been able to work in a multitude of public health organizations and sectors in order to gain a vast variety of experiences that will help guide me during my career. One of the most concerning trends that I have seen during this time in our current landscape is the use of [pesticides and metals in the food sector](#) that should not be used.¹ There has been a multitude of research studies that have identified these heavy metals as harmful to our children.

One recent study found that [95% of baby foods are contaminated with heavy metals](#).² This is concerning as children are bombarded by a multitude of chemicals on a daily basis and adding metals into their food does not help their health. These heavy metals have been linked to [developmental delays, behavioral abnormalities, and learning disabilities](#).³ Another study further supported this as they found that children with [higher levels of urine argentineum](#) had a significantly higher risk of developing dyslexia.⁴ Speaking from my own experience, growing up with dyslexia can be difficult. This learning disorder puts children at a disadvantage and sometimes can not be detected early enough before a child feels helpless behind.

I am hoping that passing this bill as it will help cause a cascade of change and set a precedent of limiting the use of heavy metals in baby foods. There is currently only one other state that regulates and tests for these metals, being [California](#).⁵ I believe Maryland should support and pass this bill in order to bring into light the importance of this issue. If passed, Maryland will be able to implement a testing system that would test baby food for these toxic metals.

¹ <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/food-pesticides-and-other-chemicals>

² <https://journals.lww.com/mcnjournal/fulltext/2020/03000/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5333623/>

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32289584/>

⁵ <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-safety/>

Please take these facts into consideration when considering this bill and I ask that you take a stand with me against toxic metals that harm our most susceptible age group.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Black
Benjaminblack10@hotmail.com