

**HB612 Written Testimony – Ways and Means Committee (2/12 at 1:00 PM)**

*Public Schools - Lifesaver Schools Program - Establishment*

Carroll County Student Government Association Member

Isabel Cabrera - Liberty High School Student

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Isabel Cabrera and I am a student from Carroll County Public Schools. I write to you on behalf of students in Maryland to request a favorable report on House Bill 612.

Last year, my school faced numerous incidents that deeply affected the entire community. Two noted situations involved one student with POTS and another who experienced a severe allergic reaction during lunch. Despite the quick response from teachers and staff in these scenarios, it became apparent that many were unsure of how to properly administer first aid, foundational medical care, or use an EpiPen. In addition to these concerns, a sense of stigmatism was left throughout the school involving the student with POTS, pushing for my drive in mental health and health wellness advocacy. The social ignorance and the delay in providing the necessary assistance for an allergy could have had even more dire consequences if not for the eventual arrival of paramedics, certified students, and or the support of students' close relatives.

According to research from the National Institute of Health, a substantial amount of students were reported to possess no knowledge of first aid procedures with additional studies revealing around only 40-50% of these students in reality ever obtain proper training. This highlighting statistic shines a line on the substantial need for increased knowledge of first aid education in schools; as well as the additional resources needed for students to foster awareness and understanding of first-aid related situations and various emergencies. The concept of receiving first-aid education is critical for exactly this reason; even if only a few students receive this education, those few students will have the ability to save a life when faced with future arising emergencies. Imagine the benefits of the Lifesaver Schools Program that provides this towards students, school personnel, and more inside public schools.

This incident highlighted a critical gap in my school's readiness to handle medical emergencies- bigger or smaller communities. The Lifesaver Schools Program aims to address exactly this issue by providing essential training in first aid, CPR, mental wellness program(s), and the use of emergency medical equipment in my local almater. By equipping students, teachers, and staff with these vital tools and skills, we can ensure that everyone is better prepared to respond swiftly and effectively in emergency situations. Implementing the Lifesaver Schools Program in our school would not only enhance the safety of our students but also empower us to take action when it matters most in my smaller community. From already lacking common resources in my local public school, this foundation step in wellness education would help further my community, futhermore school's education and dedication towards students to ensure a safer environment for everyone. It is crucial that we learn from past experiences and take proactive steps to prevent future tragedies. I strongly believe that with the right training we can create a safer and more secure environment for everyone.

Accordingly, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB612 from the committee. Thank you for your time.