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VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 424

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass:

This letter is written on behalf of the Maryland Industrial Technology Alliance (“MITA”), a non-profit trade association representing more than 20 industrial, manufacturing and supporting businesses **opposing House Bill 424**, which would prohibit the sale of certain juvenile products, mattresses, and furniture containing flame retardant chemicals. MITA opposes this bill and requests an Unfavorable Report for the following reasons:

- **Harmful for businesses:** HB 424 would impose significant supply chain constraints on retailers. In addition, the State has insufficient resources to ensure compliance with the requirements outlined in the bill. This will have the end effect of imposing significant compliance obligations on Maryland’s businesses with no consideration of the benefits of such requirements.
- **Fires are a real danger:** Fire departments in the United States between 2010 and 2014 responded to an average of 5,630 home structure fires per year, in which upholstered furniture was the first item ignited. Such fires caused an annual average of 440 civilian fire deaths, 700 civilian fire injuries, and \$269 million in direct property damage. Fires starting with upholstered furniture caused approximately 17% of U.S. home fire deaths between 2009 and 2013. When mattresses and bedding are added, the percentage of deaths rises to 31%. Flame retardant chemicals enhance public safety by stopping or delaying the onset and spread of fires, providing additional time for families to escape and firefighters to respond, saving lives and promoting the public good.
- **Overly broad:** HB 424 as drafted includes hundreds of substances with no consideration of individual attributes. Rather than jumping to conclusions using a “one-size-fits-all” approach, the State should carefully consider the costs and benefits of each substance before deciding to regulate. Otherwise, the State runs the risk of unduly harming public safety by banning substances that mitigate the risk of dangerous fires on behalf of Maryland families.

For these reasons, MITA respectfully request that you give HB 424 an **Unfavorable Report**.

Very truly yours,


Todd R. Chason

cc: Health and Government Operations Committee Members