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Prince George's County

Health and Government  
Operations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Health Occupations and  
Long Term Care

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### Favorable Testimony

#### HB1294: Public Health- Businesses and Retail Establishments- Hand Sanitizer

Chairman Derek E. Davis and honorable members of the Economic Matters Committee, I am appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to introduce and ask for a favorable report of House Bill: 1294. This piece of legislation comes at a crucial time. The health and safety of all Maryland citizens should be a priority of the MGA, especially while we navigate the pandemic crisis. HB1294 requires certain businesses and retail establishments to provide hand sanitizer at all touch screens that are used by customers.

With the rapid expansion of technology in the 21st century, touch screens are commonplace in establishments. These devices are typically used to facilitate most interactions in establishments. From checking in at airports, to ordering food in restaurants and checking out of hotels, touch screen prevalence has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Touch screens allow businesses and retail establishments to continue to operate with limited staffing and provide a necessary tool. However, these surfaces are touched by an untold amount of customers and can become contaminated. In fact, according to research done by Insurance Quotes \*, the average self-check-in screen at an airport contained 253,857 colony-forming unit (CFU). That's over 13 times more than the average of an airport water fountain button. One check-in screen recorded over 1 million CFU. In comparison, on average only 172 CFU are found on bathroom seats. \*This research included them conducting 18 tests across six surfaces from three major U.S. airports and airline flights. Then, their swabs were sent to a lab and they found the average number of viable bacteria and fungal cells per square inch, or colony-forming units (CFU), to see how sanitary various traveling surfaces truly are. (Insurance Quotes, 2018.) While we can hope that people are properly washing their hands during these unprecedented times, we can require establishments to provide hand sanitizer at these devices to minimize the spread of various diseases, including COVID-19. Having sanitation so quickly accessible is necessary for the safety of Marylanders.

The FDA, as well as the CDC, have issued guidelines stating that while soap and water are best at killing the novel coronavirus, hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol content works as effectively. Requiring this at touch screen stations is an action Maryland can take right now to help stop the spread of

COVID-19. Marylanders across the State want to get back to “normal” and if we can prevent more spreading, we can work toward achieving that. The Bill authorizes the Maryland Department of Health to adopt certain regulations relating to this Bill to ensure its efficient implementation. For these reasons, I encourage a favorable report for HB1294: Public Health- Businesses and Retail Establishments- Hand Sanitizer.

Source Used: <https://www.insurancequotes.com/health/germs-at-the-airport>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Charles", enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Nick Charles  
Maryland State Delegate - District 25