

SB654 Sunscreen education

Good afternoon, Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Victoria Flowers and I am a Baltimore County resident. I come before you today to ask you to give Senate Bill 654 consideration. A very personal tragedy is what led me to appear before you today, the passing of my oldest child at the age of 24 from melanoma. Cancer as most know is horrific. Skin cancer is by far the least spoken about disease. Which is insane because your skin is the largest organ of the human body. Most do not know that this cancer comes in various forms, squamous cell, basal cell and the two deadliest, melanoma and Merkle cell.

It is impossible for me to go into such detail about the medical literature in great detail in my allotted time with you today. Educating our children about protecting their skin while in school is imperative. This could be done at age-appropriate levels. From simply teaching them about sunscreen and re-application while outdoors, to UV protective clothing, to telling their parents or guardians and doctors if they notice a mole changing in shape size or color. I do understand why this or any legislative body might be reluctant to prescribe what is taught in our schools, and that is why this bill is flexible in terms of the method of education. Whether it's a lesson in a health class, a speaker at a school assembly, or even an educational pamphlet that goes home to parents, the important thing is communicating the risks involved. This is no different than other such health and wellness messages shared with students in a school setting.

Had all of this been in place years ago, perhaps things would be different for my family. This, I will never know for sure, because we cannot go back and change the past, only do better job for future generations.

In closing, I alone could not save my son. His doctors tried to help with various surgeries, and chemo to try to stomp out the beast he had fought. As a parent, I could only be there and watch as he endured horrific suffering from melanoma. While as stated earlier, I cannot go back in time and change the past, I also know that I cannot stand idly by and not take action to try to prevent this from happening to any other family. The only way I know how to do this is through education and that starts with the help from our Senators and Delegates and Governor in Annapolis. Please help me save lives.

Thank you

Victoria Flowers