

Testimony in Support of SB 104

January 20, 2021

Chairman Pinsky & Members of the Committee –

My name is Sallie Dievendorf, and I am Wesley Lipicky's grandmother. Wesley, a 9-year-old third grader, was killed two and a half years ago at his elementary school in Virginia by an electronic partition in the school's gym area. Wesley had been asked by his teacher to participate in the operation of the partitions and was crushed between a partition and the wall.

Wesley's death has left a hole in my heart that will never heal. Our family is destroyed. I know that there is nothing that I can do to bring Wesley back, but I am determined to do everything possible to see that such a tragedy never happens to another family. To that end, I worked with Virginia Delegate Mark Sickles and others to get Virginia to pass HR1753, named the Wesley Charles Lipicky Bill, which establishes regulations concerning the operation of the equipment and mandatory training of operators. It mandates that no children be in the area of operation unless there are sensors restricting the partition operation. SB104 is virtually identical to our Virginia bill that passed unanimously. Maryland is to be commended for being proactive in establishing such legislation now...not waiting for a preventable tragedy to occur. At this point I would also like to say that it is my fervent hope that schools and school districts will find the funds to be able to accept the infrared sensor option in the bill because these sensors will protect everyone, even against the careless behavior of adults.

I am pleased to address you today to urge you to pass SB 104. Our children need the protection of this bill now, and school administrators need to know of the seriousness of the matter. I am a member of American Society for Testing and Materials and have been working for two years on a committee to develop an international standard for the use of electronic partitions. The final ASTM standard will be voluntary but will carry the weight of this premier organization...another step in the right direction.

Thank you for your attention.