



TO: The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Michele Guyton

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 401 – *Public Schools – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 401.

House Bill 401 requires the State Board of Education to develop a model policy to support the educational and parenting goals and improve the educational outcomes of pregnant and parenting students. The policy shall include requirements for local school systems to assist pregnant and parenting students in accessing lactation accommodations, childcare services, and other support services. The bill also expands the types of absences that must be excused for pregnant and parenting students to include lactation time.

It is an unfortunate fact that there are a significant number of pregnant and parenting students enrolled in our public education system. These students face significant hurdles in reaching academic success given the demands that accompany pregnancy and parenthood. Providing a framework to assist these students in achieving successful outcomes will benefit not only the students but their families as well. Enhancing their support within the school system and making necessary accommodations that acknowledge their additional responsibilities will enhance the likelihood that they will become self-supporting, productive members of their communities.

MDAAP recognizes that some of the provisions in the bill, as drafted, may need to be modified to address fiscal concerns, such as lactation facilities in elementary and middle schools but MDAAP believes the objectives of the bill must be addressed and that a reasonable framework can be created with the collaborative involvement of all stakeholders. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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