

Dear Committee Members,

I ask that you **OPPOSE** SB0628 for the following reason:

1. Schools are learning institutions and not public health institutions. Test scores for math and science continue to lag behind other countries, as these two sectors continue to grow in the international marketplace. This is where we should be investing our funds – <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/the-u-s-is-losing-its-competitive-advantage-3306225>
2. Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are outpacing communicable diseases globally - https://ourworldindata.org/burden-of-disease?fbclid=IwAR21qe7cjRBYGNDJlzJPMGyFgArgyY4Ku1KBt5XZ3K50_LpQbiU0pifMt6Y#the-disease-burden-by-cause. **In the US, non-communicable diseases make up 86% of the total disease burden, while communicable diseases make up only 4.5%.** Obesity continues to rise, while our food quality continues to decline. I see 20-year olds with BMIs in the 40s – these are individuals that have solid access to healthcare. Healthcare and access to it is not the issue, food access is. Honestly, health clinics in schools do not solve this issue, however, funds to bolster access to real food do. Please put this in perspective.
3. In Montgomery County, there is a rise in hate speech and demonstrations of hate. Clearly, the pandemic has created more division and mental health concerns. How about increasing the number of social workers/ counselors in schools?

I ask you to oppose SB0628 and focus on spending funds where they need to be spent. The public health department provides plenty of opportunities for families to receive physicals and check-ups. Let's use state funds to enhance the availability of STEM opportunities so our future adults can be competitive in the global marketplace.

Thank you,
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