

TESTIMONY FOR BILL 602 -

Establishing prohibitions and requirements regarding the sale of diet pills to individuals under the age of 18 years

Submitted by Saifa Sowa

Good afternoon. My name is Saifa Sowa, and I am a senior in high school. Growing up, I witnessed the devastating consequences of social media body dissatisfaction, which was exacerbated by teens' access to diet medicines.

I opened my first Instagram account while I was in middle school, and I was suddenly exposed to a multitude of influencers. They were tall and slender at times and curvaceous at others, but their bodies always conformed to the prevailing standards. The majority of the women I saw on my page were marketing diet teas and pills. Although I have always been aware of the negative consequences of diet pills, seeing them widely used on social media gave the impression that they weren't as horrible as they were made out to be. I tried my first diet pill because I wanted to look like the women I saw. That was the one and only time I ever took them. That's because I was fortunate enough to have teachers and parents who educated me about the consequences of detox teas and diet pills on children's bodies, and their guidance instantly came to mind.

I was one of the lucky ones. I had people who talked to me about the dangers surrounding diet supplements. Not many teens are fortunate enough to have that. According to data, 75% of teenagers have not had an adult discuss the dangers of nutrition and muscle-building supplements with them. Social media will always exist, and body standards will remain until something is done about it. This means that teenagers will be vulnerable to body dysmorphia and other body image issues and a majority of the time they will turn to over-the-counter diet pills, ones which will have detrimental effects. We must prohibit the sale of over-the-counter diet supplements to minors in order to stop this from occurring. To protect our children and younger family members. To protect our youth.

Sincerely,
Saifa Sowa