

TESTIMONY FOR BILL 602 -
Establishing prohibitions and requirements regarding the sale of diet pills to individuals under
the age of 18 years
Submitted by Arshia Verma

Hello Members of Maryland State Senate,

I'm Arshia Verma, a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin. Today, I am testifying through my involvement with the Youth Advocacy Corps of the Harvard University Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders. Through this testimony, I hope to share my perspective backing Bill 602.

I grew up in Elkridge, Maryland and this bill is deeply important to me because it will protect the health of countless youth in Maryland by prohibiting the sale of over-the-counter diet pills to minors. I implore you to vote in favor of this bill that will take care of your young and impressionable constituents.

As an 18 year old girl, I understand the heavy influence of social media, marketing, and beauty standards. I have seen my friends get on social media as early as 6th grade at the age of 11, and quickly get addicted to the shiny image of influencers and models. As our generation grows up with sponsored posts and neverending advertisements on every corner of the internet, it is becoming harder and harder to escape the beauty ideals that we are expected to meet.

It is the hope of looking like the heavily-edited models and influencers that may drive youth just like me to seek out these products in hopes of losing weight and fitting in. However, what many young people don't know, is that these supplements are often laced with banned pharmaceuticals, heavy metals, pesticides, and other toxic ingredients. With the common sale of these products at trusted pharmacies and local corner stores, it is all too easy to blindly purchase and consume these dietary supplements with no suspicions as to their true ingredients.

In an effort to serve in the state youth's best interest, I strongly urge you to vote in support of Bill 602.

Thank you,
Arshia Verma