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Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee

Pensions Subcommittee
Chair, Rules Committee

Joint Committees

Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight

Joint Committee on Pensions

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson

SB 602: Public Health – Sale of Diet Pills to Minors – Prohibition

Good afternoon Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of The Finance Committee. I am here to present SB0602 Public Health – Sale of Diet Pills to Minors – Prohibition

This bill is for the purpose of protecting our children from the dangers of over-the-counter dietary pills consumption. Our children are at risk of digesting these medicated pills, without proper regulation, causing adverse health risks. These health risks are critical as these dietary pills have a list of substances that when overconsumed have been linked to severe liver injury and even induced death. We do not want our children to have the option to simply purchase these pills. Currently these children can go to their nearest pharmacy and purchase these pills without any identification or limitation. As an educator for over forty years, I see the harmful effects that medication can have over our precious children's mental and physical health. With the recent discussions of mental health, it is important that we take care of our children in their tender ages, as they can be susceptible to many dangers that the world of medication has to offer. In the United States, there are reports of two million self-poisoning cases and around 30% are due to over-the-counter drugs. We do not want our children to become addicted, let alone use these supplements without the supervision of a legal guardian or health professional.

This legislation prohibits a person from selling, transferring, or otherwise furnishing "diet pills" to an individual younger than the age of 18 without a prescription. This bill will protect our youth from the dangers of overconsumption of these dietary pills. It would provide an age restriction, along with a proper prescription to be able to consume these dietary pills. We do not want our children getting their hands on these supplements without the guidance of a legal adult, guardian, or doctor advising them on the proper usage. Over-the-counter supplementation should not be the standard, as unregulated access of these pills is becoming an issue across our state. This is a process where we all must step in to fight for our children, protect our future, and do our due diligence in keeping them safe.

Thus, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for SB602.