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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates  
Ways and Means Committee  
Public Schools – Anaphylactic Food Allergies – Guidelines (SB120)  
March 29, 2023**

**SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. SB0120 aligns with Free State PTA's principle for legislative action which states that schools must provide a safe environment where all students, teachers and staff can thrive.

SB0120 requires each county board of education to adopt, implement, and publish guidelines for reducing the risk to students with anaphylactic food allergies and develop a system to disclose the major food allergens contained in the foods served in the school. The legislation also adds a list of the top food allergens that will be required when disclosing ingredients in menus.

There are 32 million Americans living with severe allergies to food, insect venom, medication and latex. Many of them are at risk for anaphylaxis (a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction). Anaphylaxis causes approximately 1,500 deaths annually. Today, one in 13 children has food allergies, or roughly two in every classroom. Nearly 40 percent of these children have already experienced a severe or life-threatening allergic reaction. Severe allergic reactions should always be handled as a medical emergency. A Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan is recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as best practice in their Voluntary Guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

Comprehensive food allergy guidelines ensure a safe and effective educational environment for students with severe food allergies. Therefore the Free State PTA urges the passage of SB0120.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of  
Marla Posey-Moss, President

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13\\_243135\\_a\\_food\\_allergy\\_web\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_a_food_allergy_web_508.pdf)